CONFLICT IN CORINTH: THE APPROPRIATENESS OF HONOUR-SHAME AS THE PRIMARY SOCIAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

Many recent studies in contemporary social anthropology have noted the vital import of the concepts of honour and shame and how these are able both to generate ideas of social identity within a community, and, in particular, to elucidate patterns of social behaviour. This has been notably evident amongst the communities of the Mediterranean littoral. At the same time, multi-disciplinary research exploring the communities of the Ancient Near East, especially those undertaken by social historians investigating the ancient societies of Israel, Greece, and Rome, have revealed that these, too, lived within the social constraints of honour and shame. These twin concepts are said to have had a profound influence upon such ancient communities, and, for some, are seen to represent the pivotal values of Greco-Roman social life. Unsurprisingly then, these same values are also evident within the narrative discourses of the Old and New Testaments, and a wide number of studies have sought to examine a particular text or social scenario through the lens of honour and shame. But despite having had a voluminous number of monographs and articles written on it, the letter of 1 Corinthians has remained relatively untouched by studies of honour-shame; yet it presents a unique exposé of numerous aspects of social life in Greco-Roman first-century CE culture. My aim here is to examine the extent to which the social constraints of honour and shame may have had a direct influence upon the multifarious problems of social behaviour so evident within the community (not least the factionalism and strife which caused so many internal problems). In so doing, it presents a fresh reading of the letter, and the thesis it proposes is that the honour-shame model provides an appropriate and compelling framework within which to view the letter holistically within its social context.

(i) I, Mark Finney, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 98, 000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

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(ii) I was admitted as an M.Litt research student in September 1998 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in September 1999; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 1999 and 2004.

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are taken from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (eds. S. Hornblower/A. Spawforth, 3rd edn., Oxford, 1996) and *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (eds. P. H. Alexander *et al*, Hendrickson, 1999). Where the two differ, the *OCD* is preferred. The following abbreviations are also employed,

AA	American Anthropologist
AAA	*American Anthropological Association*
Anthrop	*Anthropologica*
ARA	*Annual Review of Anthropology*
BAFCS	The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting (series editor, B. W. Winter, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)
Braund	Braund, D. C, *Augustus to Nero: A Sourcebook on Roman History, 31 BC-AD 68* (London: Croom Helm, 1985)
CA	Current Anthropology
CI	*Classics Ireland*
DNTB	*Dictionary of New Testament Background* (eds. C. A. Evans/S. E. Porter, Leicester: IVP, 2000)
ESCJ	Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme/Studies in Christianity and Judaism
JAES	*Journal of the American Ethnological Society*
JCH	*Journal of Christian Education*
JIH	*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*
JIS	*Journal of Indo-European Studies*
JRAI	*Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*
JRASup	Journal of Roman Archaeology: Supplement Series
Lewis/Short	C. T. Lewis/C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879
L&N	J. P. Louw/E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2nd edn., New York: UBS, 1989)
UBS	United Bible Societies' *Greek-English Dictionary of the NT*, (B. M. Newman, 1971)
NYAcadSci	*New York Academy of Science*
OCCL	*Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* (ed. M. C. Howatson, 2nd. edn. Oxford: OUP, 1997)
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary* (ed. P. G. Glare, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982)
Smallwood	E. M. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967)
TDNTW	*The NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words* (ed. V. D. Verbrugge, Paternoster, 2000)
Theol	Theology
TrinJ	*Trinity Journal*
West	A. B. West, *Latin Inscriptions, 1896-1926. Corinth: Results*, VIII.2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931)

Classical texts are taken from the Loeb with the following additions,

Aristophanes	*Birds.* S. Halliwell, Oxford: OUP 1998.
Aristotle	*The Nicomachean Ethics* D. Ross, Oxford: OUP 1980.
Herodotus	*Histories.* G. Rawlinson, Ware: Wordsworth Classics 1996.
Homer	*Iliad.* M. Hammond, London: Penguin 1987.
	Iliad. R. Lattimore, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1951.
	Odyssey. R. Lattimore, New York: HarperCollins 1975.
	Odyssey. W. Shewring, Oxford: OUP 1980.
Horace	*Satires and Epistles*, N. Rudd, London: Penguin, 1973.
Justin Martyr	*Dialogue with Trypho*, T. B. Falls, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1948.
Juvenal	*The Satires* N. Rudd, Oxford: OUP 1992.
Lucan	*Civil War* S. H. Braund, Oxford: OUP, 1992.
Petronius	*The Satyricon*, J. P. Sullivan, London: Penguin, 1986.
Tacitus	*Annals.* M. Grant, London: Penguin 1989.

Ancient authors and works omitted from both the *OCD* and the *SBL Handbook* are notated in full. English citations from the Mishnah are by H. Danby (Oxford, 1933), those of the LXX by L. Brenton (Hendrickson, 1851). English translations of the Bible are taken from the NRSV unless otherwise indicated.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation investigates the cultural forces of honour-shame at work upon the early Christ-movement at Corinth, as seen through 1 Corinthians, and presents a case for the thematic centrality of honour and shame within and behind the text.[1] It suggests that the honour-shame model[2] most suitably articulates and informs the multi-faceted social context of the letter, which is one of various internal problems besetting the nascent community (e.g., factionalism, antagonism, and discord), as well as interpersonal problems between some members of the community and the apostle Paul.[3] Although evidence of these values in contemporary Western culture is largely diminished, the pursuit of honour and the avoidance of shame are widely attested human motivations,[4] and, as will be presented, this is certainly true of many ancient cultures including that of the early Roman empire within which the early Christ-movement emerged.

The impetus for this study came from an examination of recent works on 1 Corinthians, and particularly from a recent monograph by Bruce Winter (2001) who sought to examine a number of social changes which occurred in Corinth following Paul's departure, and to reflect upon how these may have precipitated various difficulties within

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[1] On the problems of nomenclature for χριστιανός, Ἰουδαῖος and ἀλλοφύλοι/ἔθνη see Stanley 1996; Esler 1998:3-5; 2003:40-76; J. H. Elliot 2000:6, 466-467, 788-797; Lieu 2002:192ff. In this study, the terms 'Christ-movement,' 'Christ-follower' etc. will be preferred over 'Christian.' Ἰουδαῖος will be translated as 'Judean,' or 'Israelite' (a self-designation of first-century CE "Jews," Rom 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22). From the perspective of the NT and LXX, ἔθνη had the connotation of 'idolatrous foreigner' (i.e., a non-Israelite immersed in idolatry), and will be translated as 'pagan' when it reflects this nuance. Otherwise, the nomenclature 'Greco-Roman' will refer generally to a non-Israelite.

[2] On models and their use see below.

[3] I define *culture* as a "moral system" or "symbolic system" that unites people into communities with shared values; and *society* as a "social mode of life—the customs and organization of an ordered community" (see Geertz 1973; Moxnes 1993; Bettini 1991; Fox/King 2002). In the construction of a "world-view" the work of Berger (1969) and Berger/Luckmann (1967) has had particular influence, but see recent critiques by Horrell (1996:41-42; 2000:94-99) and Adams (2000:3-7, 23-25).

[4] So, Berger 1974.

the Christ-movement there.[1] Winter's perspective of a social analysis of the community *following* Paul's departure was especially appealing, for my own thoughts were reflecting upon questions of a not dissimilar nature. For example, if Paul had been the founder and guiding mentor of the community for some long time, then why, between the time of his departure and the writing of 1 Corinthians, had social relations deteriorated so badly? And why were individuals, or some (or even many) in the community, now engaged in activities which the apostle could condemn only in the severest of terms; e.g., that someone should be handed over to Satan (1 Cor 5:5); that certain conduct was "disgraceful," or could "destroy" a fellow believer, or could be construed as participating with demons (11:6; 8:11; 10:20-21); that the community was setting its heart on "evil" (10:6); and that the community was bringing itself under judgement, sickness, and death (11:30)? It is a list of extraordinary concerns. What deleterious social forces were at work which could precipitate such a wide-ranging number of critical problems? This latter point led onto a second endeavour of study—to examine 1 Corinthians holistically, and to ascertain whether there was one particular social force at work which could elucidate or even accommodate all of the disparate sections of the letter and the multifarious problems within the community.[2]

The result of such reflection is the dissertation here. By combining a close reading of the Pauline text with an ongoing honour-shame dialogue on selected topics, it argues that

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[1] E.g., grain shortages, the influence of the imperial cult, the relocation of the Isthmian games.

[2] The wealth of contextual data examined by Winter is interesting and insightful but it is disappointing that, in a study purporting to investigate the wider influence of Greco-Roman culture on the believing community, Winter fails to engage with any of the social-scientific studies written on the early Christ-movement over the last thirty years. Of the important studies on 1 Corinthians reviewed below (section 1.1), Winter disregards the work of Fiorenza and Wire; cites M. M. Mitchell, Pogoloff and Chow only once each; and cites Meggitt only twice. So, too, the abundant literature on the forces of honour-shame within the first-century CE social world are virtually ignored by Winter, who simply makes some very superficial observations about "shame" in 1 Corinthians (citing only Epstein 1989 and Kaster 1997). The overall framework of Winter's thesis, that significant changes in the social context of the Corinthian Christ-movement took place following Paul's departure, correct in my view, would have benefited considerably by interaction with a number of social-scientific studies; not least, those reviewed below.

many neophyte believers, entering the community following Paul's departure, strained to mimic their previous honour-bound social realities within the new community, and in so doing precipitated the various interpersonal tensions mentioned above. Hence, in many ways it is a crisis of social identity which lay at the heart of the neophyte experience; a crisis stemming directly from the cultural constraints and notions of honour and shame. Paul's response, in a deliberate effort to deracinate social norms and to present a new and counter-cultural paradigm for life as a Christ-follower, was to urge the focussing upon that most horrific of symbols, the cross of Christ, with all the cultural stigmatism of shame that this brought. He does so to demonstrate the (culturally radical) necessity of eschewing the pursuit of honour and to seek instead, the *imitatio christi* which, he maintains, his apostleship so adequately illustrates.

This introduction will begin with an analysis of the rubric of honour-shame, which will fall into three sections: an examination and critique of the honour-shame model in Mediterranean studies; a review of honour and shame in biblical studies; and finally, a sketch of honour and shame within the Greco-Roman world. It will then examine the semantics of honour-shame within the NT (particularly with respect to the genuine Pauline corpus[1]), and will conclude with an outline of the method and format of the ensuing study. In arguing for the thesis outlined above, my further aim in this dissertation is to offer a fresh reading of 1 Corinthians within its social context, for Pauline studies until recently have tended to neglect the social contexts of the literary texts, a neglect which has led to a lacuna, if not serious distortions, in an understanding of social identity within the early Christ-movement. Certainly, the social dimension of Paul's emphasis on the cross has been

[1] This study draws primarily upon the seven letters normally designated as authentically Pauline (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon), but in terms of social context the Deutero-Paulines are, naturally, of additional interest.

neglected, for although a profound theological construct,[1] the reading here will suggest that Paul's presentation of the cross of Christ is offered (or insisted upon!) as the only paradigm in which the social lifestyle of the Christ-movement can adequately proceed. In this way, it will be clear that Paul's use of the language of the cross has a significant *social* point to make.[2]

The Rubric of Honour and Shame

A. Honour and Shame in Contemporary Mediterranean Ethnography

Contemporary anthropological research of the Mediterranean littoral has emphasized that the members of every society share a common cognitive orientation; in effect, an unverbalized tacit assertion of their understanding of social "norms," "values," and "rules." Such an orientation provides the members of a given society with basic premises and sets of assumptions normally neither recognized nor questioned, but which structure and guide behaviour in much the same way that grammatical rules, unrecognized by most people, structure and guide their linguistic forms.[3] All normative behaviour of the members of a group is a function of their particular way of looking at their total environment, their unconscious acceptance of the "rules of the game."[4] Within the context of such cognitive orientation, the import of the concept of "honour-shame," a recurring theme in Mediterranean ethnographies, has been seen to be of vital significance, and, indeed, has been

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[1] See esp., Bultmann 1951; Morris 1955, 1965; Käsemann 1971; Thrall 1973; Moltmann 1974; Barbour 1979; Weber 1979; Fitzmyer 1981; Stuhlmacher 1986; A. T. Hanson 1987; Cousar 1990.
[2] See esp. S. C. Barton 1982; Pickett 1997.
[3] So, Foster 1967.
[4] See Bourdieu 1965; Abu-Zahra 1976; Pitt-Rivers 1971.

labelled the "master symbol" of Mediterranean cultures.[1] It refers to the cultural constructs used to evaluate social worth and to order social relations between individuals and kinship groups (Peristiany 1965; Gilmore 1982). Julian Pitt-Rivers sums up the salient points in his oft-repeated definition,

> Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, *his right* to pride. (1965:21, italics his)

In such a culture, there is thus a constant dialectic between the norms of social behaviour and the necessity of reproducing such norms by one's own behaviour.[2]

Criticism of such an opinion has come from a variety of perspectives (e.g., Herzfield 1980, 1984; Lever 1988; Wikan 1984) and has tended not only to invigorate the discussion, but to help define and delineate more clearly the anthropological quest.[3] Herzfield (1980) rightly stressed that semantic generalizations of `honour` and `shame` were in danger of becoming counterproductive if ethnographic studies simply attempted to move towards theoretical propositions. Equally, the wide variety of social, sexual, economic and other cultural standards subsumed under what he described as the "nebulous"[4] categories of honour-shame could be lost if their significance *within* their respective cultures was

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[1] So, Gilmore 1987:17. Likewise, John Davis, in his seminal work, *People of the Mediterranean*, has even suggested that, because of its ubiquity, honour might constitute the "social fact" of Mediterranean life (1977:13). See also Abou-Zeid 1965; Abu-Lughod 1986; J. Davis 1987; Peristiany 1968, 1976.

[2] Cf. Malina 1993:32

[3] Caution on the use of honour-shame categories in anthropological field-work had been voiced by Baroja as early 1965. See also Bergant 1996; Brandes 1987. For a critique of Wikan, see Kressell 1992:37f. Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers were themselves careful to point out that their understanding of the Mediterranean as a cultural unit was more a matter of epistemology than of any kind of rigid geographical definition (1992:6). They recognized that there are areas within the Mediterranean basin which do not necessarily exhibit the characteristics proposed and, equally, that there are areas outside the Mediterranean that reveal codes of honour similar to those observed within it.

[4] 1980:340.

minimized. Herzfield's concern towards the premature reification of honour-shame and on the apriorism, circularity and ethnocentrism inherent in cross-cultural analysis convinced him of the need for, what he calls, an ethnographic particularism.

Such criticism has been generally welcomed in Mediterranean anthropology for providing a necessary warning, but, for the most part, anthropologists after Herzfield (and with due sensitivity to his warnings), have continued to assert the import of honour and shame (Gilmore 1987; Delaney 1987; and Giovannini 1987). During the 1990's a newer generation of Mediterranean anthropologists tested the honour-shame model in a variety of locations, and from a variety of perspectives.[1] These demonstrate a sensitivity that was often absent from earlier treatments of honour-shame, and anthropologists now demonstrate the need to understand the contradictions and tensions as well as the convergence in the values of honour, religion, kinship, patronage, and such like. Coombe (1990), for instance, speaks of "how the cultural concepts of honour and shame might be revitalized to inform larger theoretical concerns with the interrelationship between culture and power."[2] Here, the concept of honour may be allowed far more complexity, and instead of attempting to pin it down, define it, or explain it in terms of material, ecological, or social determinants, its use is articulated synchronically and demonstrated in the social relations and strategies at specific historical junctures. Dubisch (1993), too, noting that honour and shame is linked to sexuality and dominance sought to express discussions of gender in the Mediterranean within a wider and more complex conceptual context.[3] She employed field data from Greece to show that gender concepts may be used to establish and maintain the boundaries between

[1] E.g. Coombe 1990; Creighton 1990; Kressel 1992; Peristiany 1992; Tapper 1992-3; Dubisch 1993; Hatch 1989; Kilborne 1995; Chance 1996; Goddard 1996.
[2] 1990:232.
[3] 1993:280.

different social groups, much of which overlaped with previous discussions of the social constraints of honour-shame and sexuality.

Even outside the Mediterranean, recent ethnographic study has highlighted the importance and usefulness of the honour-shame model (Creighton 1990; Chance 1996). The general results of such studies has been to reaffirm, albeit in a more judicious and nuanced way, the earlier consensus of the importance of the model. Certainly, it is now accepted that notions of honour-shame are by no means uniform and constant throughout the Mediterranean littoral, and as such, Herzfield's warnings have been heeded; but at the same time it is generally regarded that attempts to reject the honour-shame model altogether when it appears to encapsulate something of anthropological and ethnographic import is an unnecessarily pessimistic approach. The mistake of earlier field-studies has perhaps been to interpret the honour code somewhat like a dress code—as a set of rules and regulations—focussed on superficial conformity, instead of like that proposed by Delaney: "a kind of genetic code—a structure of relations—generative of possibilities."[1]

In sum, it is fair to say that, in many important respects, Mediterranean honour and shame represents the matrix of community morality, while other aspects should not be seen as alternatives to honour, but as vital components. These would include honesty;[2] hospitality and respect;[3] distinctions between honour as position or veneration,[4] masculine valour[5] or wealth;[6] and honour as a discrete moral category indicating personal virtue and equity.[7] In

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[1] Delaney 1987:35. Cf. Lawrence 2003:42.
[2] Gilmore 1987.
[3] Herzfield 1987.
[4] Peters 1976:64.
[5] Blok 1981:433.
[6] J. K. Campbell 1976:21. Schönegger (1979) reveals that in her studies of a Greek-Turkish village in Thrace, honour was separated from wealth because there was a clear demarcation between a 'rich man' and an 'honourable man.'
[7] Herzfield 1980:343.

short, comparative study has witnessed the inherently polysemic meaning of honour. So, although one can give credit to Herzfield's insistence on holistic ethnographic analyses, more recent studies suggests that his criticisms go too far in the direction of particularism, and that it is more reasonable to conclude that concepts of honour-shame remain of considerable significance, even if many aspects have been modified. In a suitably nuanced way, honour and shame represent two poles of an evaluation. It is the reflection of the social personality in the mirror of social ideals; a paradigm which can be seen to provide a framework for many aspects of contemporary Mediterranean life and to have a powerful and ineluctable effect on the perception of a person's social `worth,` and so on social standing.

B. Honour and Shame in Biblical Studies

The recent use of contemporary anthropological studies of Mediterranean communities to interpret texts from the first-century CE presupposes that there has been a certain degree of cultural consistency within this region over the centuries.[1] This working hypothesis has been generally supported by historical and classical studies in which the honour and shame paradigm has proved to be fruitful as a model.[2] Indeed, the import of such

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[1] See esp. Bruce Malina's cross-cultural modelling project (1986; 2001). Many scholars follow his lead and employ his complement of models as encapsulating typical characteristics of the ancient Mediterranean world (such as honour-shame; anti-introspective conception of the self; agonistic environment; limited good; dyadic personality; and sexual division of labour). For a critique of this project, see most recently Lawrence 2003, although, as noted above, with the more recent anthropological enquiries *continuing* to assert the import of honour-shame in a variety of contexts, her excessive scepticism appears unwarranted.

[2] In the terminology of the social-sciences, models are simply heuristic tools; they are never `true` or `false` but are construed and applied in terms of their usefulness. In order to be useful, they require at the outset the presence of relevant data within the text under examination. If such data is present, the model can be applied and has the capacity to generate new questions pertinent to the text and its cultural framework (see Esler 1994:12-13). But, models cannot deliver objectivity any more than any other method. However, if using cross-cultural methods and models can make one more sensitive, in terms of comparative analyses, both to one's own cultural framework and to that of an ancient document, it can certainly make a significant contribution to the study of the Pauline corpus and the biblical documents in general. On models and their use, Foster 1967; Malina 1986; J. H. Elliot 1986, 1993 (especially pp. 36-59); Esler 1987, 1994, 1995; Matthews/Benjamin

cultural values is not based solely upon modern Mediterranean cultures or evidence, but is supported by Semitists,[1] classicists,[2] OT scholars,[3] and NT scholars.[4] Some, however, are uncomfortable with methodological generalizations which can be endemic in cross-cultural studies (and which persist when contemporary studies are applied to biblical texts).[5] F. G. Downing, for instance, maintains that honour may have become too much of an umbrella term for biblical exegetes, for "to value anything is to honour it, and so every system of values becomes an honour system."[6] Lawrence, too, critiques the approach of some (particularly Bruce Malina and those who follow Malina's lead), claiming,

> Whilst it is clearly stated that the models are only intended to be general representations that may never be fully affirmed in a living situation, it is difficult to imagine how flexibility can be integrated into research when using such models as hermeneutical tools. Precisely because the model represents a general abstraction, it is difficult for differences between individuals to be explored, or alternatives to the model's presentation of reality given.[7]

Certainly, theories and models generated by sociologists and anthropologists are themselves far from being universally accepted; and any efforts to apply these theories to the known facts of the early Christ-movement regularly lead to the frustrating circumstances in which, through scarcity of data, the match between theory and fact is often less than perfect.

1996; Horrell 1996. Cf. the useful recent exchange between Esler (1998a, 2000) and Horrell (2000). On the hazards of applying models, Lawrence 2003:22-25. In terms of a working definition, see J. H. Elliot (1986:4-5) who states, "Models are thus conceptual vehicles for articulating, applying, testing, and possibly reconstructing theories used in the analysis and interpretation of specific data. The difference between a model and an analogy or metaphor lies in the fact that the model is *consciously structured* and *systematically arranged* in order to serve as a *speculative instrument* for the purpose of organizing, profiling, and interpreting a complex welter of detail" (italics his).

[1] E.g., Pedersen 1926, Daube 1956.

[2] E.g., Adkins 1972, Finley 1974, Lendon 1997.

[3] E.g., Pitt-Rivers 1977, Bechtel 1991, Stansell 1996, Laniak 1998.

[4] E.g., Malina 1993, J. H. Elliot 1993, Esler 1994.

[5] See Eagleton 1991:7; Horsley 1994:14; Meggitt 1998a; Downing 1999, 2000:19-42; Horrell 2000; Lawrence 2003:7-59.

[6] 2000:26.

[7] 2003:12-13 (and pp. 21, 30).

But Malina, for one, has always been cognizant of the inherent problems of model-application. In his 1993 monograph, for example, he issued a timely reminder that, "...what is honourable depends on what people consider valuable and worthy. ...an action for one group could be "deviant and shameful" but for another group the same action would be "worthy and honourable."[1] What is of prime import in model-application is, of course, evident data within the text under consideration. David Horrell reminds us that the use of a model in biblical exegesis depends upon the exegete appreciating whether or not a particular social context, or the vocabulary used within it, does in fact reveal any explicit concern for honour.[2] Likewise, both Downing and Lawrence stress that verification of model-application needs to be made on the relevance of the model to a particular text.[3] Lawrence writes, "It is clearly dangerous to interpret all social dynamics through the lens of honour and shame. However, it is also important to establish instances when honour can be identified as a core concern." Her solution is that in-depth studies of the particular social scenarios have to be conducted and mapped.[4] Such sentiments echo Herzfield's earlier insistence that evidence should be sought in indigenous discourse and that the particular community under investigation must provide the specific contents of the value system proposed.[5] Hence, in this thesis, the anthropological quest, in its widest sense (i.e., anthropology as a technique for observing social action), is used not to understand ancient Mediterranean culture as a homogenous unit but to understand a short text, character(s), or a social situation etc. The project is, of course, one of interpretation—the interpretation of the ancient text; which is the only means by which ancient cultures make themselves accessible, however imperfectly,

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[1] Malina 1993:53-54. Likewise, see Cohen 1992.
[2] Horrel 2000.
[3] Downing 2000:19-42; Lawrence 2003:33.
[4] 2003:29, 35-36; cf. Cohen 1992:598-600.
[5] 1987a:76.

to the interested observer. As such it is concerned with a fluid exchange between the internal world of the primary texts (the NT, and here, 1 Corinthians) and the external social world of secondary texts (those of the Greco-Roman and Hebrew-Judean social environments).[1] It is, as J. H. Elliot observes, a means of "...cueing into the cultural scripts and latent meanings conveyed by biblical documents."[2]

Naturally, one must proceed with care. I am reminded of the severe censure of the work of Gager (1975) by G. S. R. Thomas who claimed that Gager had not escaped the danger that "we may make our evidence fit the paradigm we are using," and that he had been too dependent on unsatisfactory secondary treatments for his picture of religion and society in the Roman Empire.[3] Similarly, Hatch (1989) claims that while contemporary research may inform modern cultures it requires sensitive and judicious use if employed to articulate aspects of Greco-Roman culture, and is best used alongside an examination of relevant cultural data drawn from a first-century framework. And John Davis (1977:242f), too, presents a critique of those social-scientific works which exhibit limited historical research or data, claiming: "There are assumptions of continuity—historical and geographical—which are not spelled out, and which should be argued, if an impression of potpourri is to be avoided."[4] It is evident, too, that certain nuances of honour and shame within particular ancient cultures are absent from comparative studies of the contemporary Mediterranean, and, equally, some socio-religious aspects in which honour and shame play a

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[1] See Rhoads (1999) who has highlighted the importance of a study of narrative and social location. The predominant focus of this study will be upon the Greco-Roman social context behind 1 Corinthians, for, here, it is suggested, is the appropriate locale for the conflict at Corinth. However, a cogent case can be made for the presence of Israelites within the community (Paul assumes, for example, that some were circumcised (7:18), he attends to Judean concerns and sensibilities (1:22-24; 9:20-22), and he appeals directly to the Torah as an authority (9:8-10; 14:34; cf. 2 Cor 3:4ff.); see Fee 1987:4; Witherington 1995:24-28); so Hebrew-Judean studies will be undertaken where relevant.

[2] 2001:11-12.

[3] See Judge 1980:206f.

[4] 1977:253. See further Horrell 1996:9-18, 26-31, esp. 13ff.

significant part are wholly different. The nascent Christ-movement, for example, emerged within a pluralistic environment dominated by the pantheon of Greco-Roman gods wherein supreme investiture of honour was accorded to these gods (and later also to the Roman emperor). In contemporary studies, however, analysis has been undertaken of, for example, Christian or Moslem groups existing within their pre-dominant Christian or Islamic culture, and so the perception of honour and shame within this "religious" framework is quite distinct.[1] Likewise, the cultural dimensions of slavery, which play a significant part in social values of first-century life (and unmistakably so with regard to the concepts of honour and shame), are obviously absent from most modern studies.[2] Other examples of marked cross-cultural differences would include themes of patronage,[3] sexual immorality,[4] and the use of law-courts (which is particularly pertinent to 1 Corinthians 6).

This latter theme also draws attention to model-application itself in that the respective field-work of J. K. Campbell (1964) and Pitt-Rivers (1977) demonstrates distinct differences. In Campbell's work amongst the Sarakatsani he found that the honour code prevents a Sarakatsanos from reaching a settlement out of court for this would be an admission of weakness in a personal confrontation. He would rather go to court despite knowing the financial costs are likely to be much higher, for, "...defeat in the courts is

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[1] On the influence of Islamic culture upon the honour-shame model see Treggiari 1991:311-313; McGinn 1998:10ff.

[2] See Cartledge 1995. Here, Cartledge uses the institution of slavery to question the extent to which there is an unbroken cultural link between the ancient and modern Mediterranean.

[3] Pitt-Rivers 1977. Analysing the contemporary framework of patronage within his own field-work, Pitt-Rivers notes, "There is a tendency to presume upon the favour of a patron when he is the employer, and servants and bailiffs frequently regard it as their due to take financial advantage of their situation." Moreover, "...the absentee landowner...seldom avoids being cheated" for "persons of high social status tend to be lenient towards the peccadillos of their trusted employees as long as they 'don't go too far'. To be penny-pinching does not go with the ideal of aristocratic behaviour" (1977:35). Such attitudes are, of course, very different to those found in the first-century CE.

[4] On adultery, for example, although in both the ancient and modern Mediterranean the adulterer may not be regarded as dishonourable, within the contemporary scenario this does not save the adulterer from committing a sin in the eyes of the church (and hence of feeling a sense of guilt before God). See Pitt-Rivers 1977:24.

merely defeat by the power of the impersonal State apparatus, which in any case, it is agreed, is corrupt and inimical to the interests of the community."[1] Conversely, in the field-work of Pitt-Rivers, undertaken predominantly (but not exclusively) in Spain, he found that the man of honour would rarely go to court, for this was explicit (and public) admission that he was incapable of administering his own affairs—a situation which would redound negatively upon his honour.[2] Hence, in this instance of *potential* model-application, even though there is overlap between field-work and ancient text, the conflicting cross-cultural models become, in some sense, unusable and cannot be applied to 1 Corinthians 6 without risking serious damage to the narrative. In such a situation it is, of course, vital that recourse be made to the wider social context of the text (i.e., a study of judicial processes within the Greco-Roman world). These few examples simply inform the exegete of potential dangers and of the necessity of analysing texts first and foremost within their own cultural setting.

The terms "honour" and "shame" are notions whose content must be deduced from actual social behaviour, and one must describe *what* in a given social group or society counts as honourable behaviour. Sometimes honour and shame are binary concepts, working in tandem; at other times one or the other predominates, and the specific character of the culture must be defined through investigation. For these reasons, the following section will present a diachronic sketch of the concepts of honour and shame from the Homeric period up to and beyond the first-century CE, all of which had a correlative influence upon the social context of the NT. The methodological aim in the presentation of such a wide analysis is to ground the contemporary model of honour and shame firmly within the socio-historical context of the ancient world, and in so doing, to articulate better the social constraints of

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[1] J. K. Campbell 1964:309, cf. pp. 240, 245.
[2] Pitt-Rivers (1977:9).

honour and shame upon the social world of the apostle Paul (and so upon the social context of 1 Corinthians). This will be the primary methodology for the study as a whole; emphasis will be given to those ancient texts which are relevant in examining a given text under consideration, while data from the results of contemporary field-work, if appropriate or of additional interest, will be generally left in the footnotes. Hence, this dissertation seeks to benefit from ancient and contemporary research and discussion within a number of disparate areas, all of which fall under the rubric of honour and shame, with the intention of making a contribution to the wider study of social identity within the nascent Christ-movement.

C. Honour and Shame in the Greco-Roman World: A Sketch[1]

C1. The Homeric Epics[2]

Within classical literature the earliest attestation of the centrality of the values of honour and shame is to be found in the Homeric poems, for both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are replete in proffering an idealized impression of the *hero*, the one who lives, acts, and even dies, within the social constraints of honour and shame.[3] This is most conspicuous in the Iliad for the essence of the epic centres around the primacy of honour. The τιμή of Achilles has been offended by Agamemnon, provoking him to withdraw from the Trojan War and to leave the other prominent Achaian warriors to test their worth against the onslaught of

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[1] The following will focus on male attitudes to honour-shame for, socially, it is amongst men that φιλοτιμία evidences most clearly the kind of dissension, enmity and jealousy observed in 1 Corinthians. However, where relevant, notions of honour-shame relevant to women in Greco-Roman culture will be drawn out at various points of the exegesis.

[2] On this section see Adkins 1960, 1972, 1972a; Friedrich 1972, 1977; Finley 1977; Cairns 1993; B. Williams 1993; Redfield 1994.

[3] Some of the traditional elements in the poems may show attestation of these same values as early as the Mycenaean period (1400-1200 BCE), see *OCD*:719; *OCCL*:283f.

Hektor and his Trojan army.[1] The subsequent success of the Trojans impels Agamemnon to make appeal to Achilles, which, on rejection, is taken up by his comrade Patroklos who temporarily rescues the Achaians but is slain by Hektor. The climax of the poem is now set as "god-like" Achilles re-enters the battle to rout the Trojans and to avenge his friend by the killing of Hektor. He thereby supremely establishes his own place in the epic, and his withdrawal from the battle serves simply to highlight his status as the superlative warrior-hero—for only he and he alone, is able to save the Achaians.[2]

In wider terms, the structure of Iliadic `honour` necessarily exists as part of a larger network of propositions which include a variety of honour-linked values. Whether these focus simply on physical stature such as strength, bravery, courage, and prowess (so, Finley 1977:28),[3] or a wider network such as power, wealth, magnanimity, personal loyalty, and sense of shame, fame or reputation (so, Friedrich 1977:290ff.), the conclusion remains the same—any attack on one's τιμή is an attack on the basis of one's life and well-being. The Homeric male, as the characters in the poems recognize, exhibits a deep sensitivity concerning questions of honour and the initial response towards any attempts to undermine it is always likely to be aggressive or violent.[4] It may be profitable to further examine the framework of Homeric honour-based values for these remained imperative down to the first-century CE and beyond.

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[1] Agamemnon's behaviour is itself a reaction to the damage inflicted upon his own honour over the loss of his concubine Chryseïs (*Il.* 1.92-162; see below, p. 20).

[2] Homer does not address the obvious and significant point that the Achaians *together* with Achilles and his warriors had been unable to defeat the Trojans over the previous ten-year period.

[3] Note the contemporary ethnographical analysis of Blok (1981:432), "Mediterranean honour is still primarily contingent on physical strength and bearing, especially so in small scale rural areas, such as the Barbagia in central Sardinia, Sicily's wester interior, the Zagori in northern Greece, the Analusian sierras and Kabylia in northern Algeria." Likewise, J. K. Campbell 1964:269-270, 278, 318; Pitt-Rivers 1965:25-29; 1968:505-506.

[4] As Friedrich (1977:294) rightly recognizes, "Achilles is physically and emotionally the most violent man in a society where one's vindication of honor often depends on violence and where debts of honor are often settled by self-help."

The Homeric Male

Within Homeric society, authority and status are confirmed only by their exercise. A man is credited with what he declares he is until that claim is disproved (if the claim is not made, he is simply assumed to lack what he has not claimed). Honour is such a claim and it is upheld until a situation arises where it may be challenged, whereupon it is either justified (or augmented), or rejected.[1] It is permanently at risk, and there is little possibility of compromise.[2] In this respect, the Homeric `hero` is synonymous with `warrior,` and the twin prerequisites of the warrior culture are constructed on two foci—prowess and honour. The one is the hero's essential attribute, the other his essential aim. Finley writes that, "Every value, every judgement, every action, all skills and talents have the function of either defining honour or realizing it."[3] In this respect, Homeric society values most highly the class of men it needs most: those who are strong, skilled in conflict and battle, and proficient in counsel and strategy; men who are equally successful in both times of war and peace.

In each of his epics, Homer commends as ἀγαθοί these most admired type of men; those who fulfill the necessary prerequisites of the warrior-hero. And the hero *par excellence* in Homeric literature is, of course, Achilles. He is the supreme warrior in a culture where the highest standard of manly character is designated by the traditional ideal of warlike behaviour. But, as Homer frequently reminds the reader, while Achilles has the power to ensure victory to the Greeks, it is through his sensitivity to questions of honour that he has the latent capacity to spread disturbance and disorder. This is observed in the opening pages of the *Iliad*, for Achilles' attitude to the loss of his concubine, Briseïs, can in no way

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[1] Finley 1977 states (p. 118), "It is the nature of honour that it must be exclusive or at least hierarchic. When everyone attains equal honour, then there is no honour for anyone. Of necessity, therefore, the world of Odysseus was fiercely competitive, as each hero strove to outdo the others."
[2] See J. K. Campbell 1992:130-147.
[3] 1977:113.

be simply construed as a sign of childishness or recalcitrance; it is the natural attitude of an adult ἀγαθός in Homeric society to questions of dishonour. The Homeric male not merely feels insecure, he is insecure. To be deprived of τιμή, even in the slightest degree, is to move so much nearer to humiliation and shame.[1] The fury which consumed Achilles over Agamemnon's ignominious behaviour would have driven him to kill the Achaian leader had not Athena intervened, and the only remaining alternative was for him to withdraw from the war.[2] Achilles' later return to the battle stems from the necessity of avenging Patroclus which is an obligation of personal honour, and not in any sense as a late recognition of his duty to the Greeks by whom he has been dishonoured.[3]

For the Homeric man, even life itself must capitulate to the ineluctable and paramount code of male honour, and many of the central figures of the *Iliad* fight nobly to their deaths because, at the call of honour, they obey the code of the hero without flinching and without question.[4] Life is considered ephemeral but honour eternal. Indeed, the heroic code was so complete and unambiguous, that neither the poet nor his characters ever had occasion to debate it. Homer highlights this most poignantly in the figure of Hector, for as this great Trojan hero stands alone before the gates of Troy preparing to face the full fury of Achilles, he feels the acute burden of shame for rejecting the earlier cautious advice of Polydamas who had urged the withdrawal of the Trojan forces. He despairs that his own arrant folly may have caused the potential destruction of his army and people, and he now ignores the pleas of Priam and Hecuba who beg their son to flee from certain death. Hector

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[1] See J. K. Campbell 1992:131; Nagy 1999:132-134.
[2] *Il.* 1.188-222, 292-303.
[3] The embassy which comes to him from Agamemnon "with glorious gifts and soothing words," therefore, had little hope of success. By offering the gifts of seven towns, and his own daughter, Agamemnon is making a display of his own honour in respect of his resources and status.
[4] The shame of Agamemnon's death was that he did not die bravely in battle, as a warrior should, but was killed by a woman, (his wife, Clytemnestra), together with her lover, Aigisthos. *Od.* 3.262-272; 11.405-439.

knows that they are right, but in a long soliloquy he rejects their appeal and re-asserts the paramount claim of honour. His choice is for an honourable and glorious death by combat in front of his city. But, paradoxically, this very act, urged upon him by the social constraints of honour and shame, also demarcates the *certain* end of his city and its people.[1]

Shame and Public Perception

Homer employs the adjectives αἰσχρός and ἐλεγχής (and cognates), as the converse of ἀγαθός, to denigrate actions and to castigate failure.[2] In the *Iliad*, Odysseus confirms to Agamemnon the reproach that will accrue to the Achaians if they return home without victory and the disgrace with which Agamemnon would be held by his fellow Greeks for returning empty-handed.[3] Success is so imperative that only results have any value; intentions are unimportant. So, too, the concern of the ἀγαθός in Homeric society is overtly 'what people will say.' For within the social system each man has an appointed place in life according to which he must comport himself, and, to some extent, whose burdens he must bear. Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, has no prospect of marrying Penelope even if, by succeeding in the Test of the Bow, he shows that he possesses certain qualities of a 'warrior,' for he is of the wrong social position. Status was of supreme importance in the social world of the epics, and a societal chasm separated those at the top, the ἄριστοι, literally the "best, noblest, bravest,"[4] the hereditary nobles who held most of the wealth and all the power (and so, all of the honour), from the rest. The economic framework was such that the acquisition of wealth, and thereby the appropriation of higher status, was, for the

[1] *Il.* 22.33-110. Cf. Arist. *Eth. Nic.*3.8.1-4; J. K. Campbell 1992:131; B. Williams 1993:79-80.
[2] On shame, B. Williams 1993:75-102; on the linking of shame with guilt, B. Williams 1993:88-95.
[3] *Il.* 2.284-298.
[4] Cf. LSJ *sv.*

most part out of the question, and as marriage, too, was strictly class-bound, the two doors to social advancement were almost impassable.[1] For these reasons the gap between the two classes was rarely crossed.[2]

Within the *Iliad*, the figure of Agamemnon is a convenient illustration of the far-reaching effects of status. His position of honour, as leader of the Achaians, was not personally earned but was the consequence of two significant points: firstly, his superior position of power arose from the fact that he was the commander of the largest contingent of ships, the largest army and the 'bravest fighters' (he has ascribed honour by birth);[3] and, secondly, both he and his brother Menelaus were the aggrieved parties needing to be avenged. Although the criminal act of Helen's abduction impinged upon the honour of the wider community, it is primarily the immediate family who have the responsibility of preserving the integrity of family honour, and of dealing with any serious violations. In Homeric culture, then, the end is indisputable: the fundamental aim is for social commendation, the chief ill is social censure, and each is made as a result of the successes or failures which that society values most highly.

On the broad canvas of the *Iliad* it is of great interest that there are to be found three catalysts of honour-shame scenarios which unleash much of the force that drives the epic. The first is the initial abduction of Helen by Paris which precipitates the war—the outrage done to the honour of her husband, Menelaus, and, to a lesser extent, to his brother,

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[1] This does not imply that there is a direct correlation between Homeric honour and material goods in that the gain of the latter *necessarily* means the gain of the former—but human honour in the epics does relate to, and *in a sense* consists of, one's material possessions. Adkins (1972a:3) articulates well the correlation of honour and wealth: "A man's τιμή is his position on that scale at whose top are the immortal gods, at the bottom the homeless beggar. And τιμή as a result commends and denotes all that differentiated the way of life of a prosperous chieftain from that of a wandering beggar—property, status, prestige, rights (in some sense) and so on...[and]on his ability to defend them." Cf. *Od.* 11.358-361; 13.7-23, 217-370.

[2] Cf. Finley 1977:53.

[3] *Il.* 2.576-580. Also of interest is the panegyric to Agamemnon in Isocrates' *Panath.* [Loeb 2.5] 78-85.

Agamemnon, demands that a military (i.e. a `violent`) response be taken in order to redress the offence done to them. The second catalyst involves Chryseïs, the daughter of the priest of Apollo, whom Agamemnon has seized, but is then forced to return. The subsequent humiliation for Agamemnon then precipitates his confrontation with Achilles. The third involves Agamemnon's seizure of Briseïs as necessary compensation for the loss of Chryseïs, an act which shames Achilles, who, as possessor of supreme honour, is also the most vulnerable to dishonour through his woman (and in some sense this is the *only way* that the consummate warrior-hero can be dishonoured). In addition to these, all of which exist on the human plain, there is a fourth, dominating, catalyst which exists among the Olympians and which involves the honour of the goddesses Hera and Athena. The opposing Achaian and Trojan forces were prepared at one point to rest the outcome of the conflict on single combat between the two main antagonists, Menelaus and Paris. Menelaus was the victor, and the conflict should then have been resolved with the return of Helen and the payment of amends. But Hera and Athena would not be content until Troy was sacked and all its men killed. The action of the two goddesses was bound up with social concepts of honour and shame for they were insistent on full retribution for the shame they had previously suffered at the hands of Paris when he judged Aphrodite the most beautiful of the three. This and nothing else was the primary cause of the fall or Troy.[1]

In sum, Homeric society stood as an `honour-culture` where social standards were defined by public and cultural perception, and where such social values (especially those of honour and shame) enmeshed all levels of society. The primary aim in life was to be well

[1] Finley 1977:140; Friedrich 1977:285-286.

spoken of; the chief ill to be socially ridiculed—the maintenance of his τιμή was hence the chief aim of Homeric man.[1]

C2. Greek and Hellenistic Literature

Education: The Influence of Homer[2]

Although the Homeric poems are literary-fictional works and are 'unhistorical' in the sense that the events portrayed in the epics are unlikely to have taken place, this does not entail that the societal values are unconnected with any communities that may have existed in earliest Greece. The poems exhibit a degree of social coherence and consistency such that later Greeks considered both the society and its values to be authentic, and there are unmistakable links with the values and organization of later Greece.[3] Consequently, the same social constraints of honour and shame which are discernible in Homer appear equally pervasive in later Greek culture and are evidenced in a broad selection of Hellenistic literature, whether it is works of poetry, drama, philosophy or history. The considerable role played by the Homeric poems in Greek pedagogy furnishes the primary factor for this and the Greeks of later periods regarded unquestionably that the society and behavioural values of the poems had the capacity to teach them valuable lessons.[4] The significance of Homer in later Greek life and culture is adequately summed up by Finley,

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[1] Adkins 1960:63.
[2] For education in general see Marrou 1977; W. V. Harris 1989; *OCD* 506-510.
[3] So Adkins 1971:1ff; 1972:10ff.; and see Moxnes 1993:172ff.
[4] During the Hellenistic period greater attention was paid to the schooling of the ordinary citizen, with many cities establishing foundations to fund teachers. At Teos, for example, all free boys were able to receive education, and Rhodes probably came nearest to universal public education (for boys) in antiquity. How far one can claim universal education among Greek children in the Hellenistic period (so Marrou 1977) is debatable (see W. V. Harris 1989 for a less optimistic view), and formal education was mostly confined to the cities. But throughout the Greek world the influence of cultural values, and of the social constraints of honour and shame, would have been pervasive.

> No other poet, no other literary figure in all history for that matter, occupied a place in the life of his people such as Homer's. He was their pre-eminent symbol of nationhood, the unimpeachable authority on their earliest history, and a decisive figure in the creation of their pantheon, as well as their most beloved and most widely quoted poet. Plato (*Republic* 606E) tells us that there were Greeks who firmly believed that Homer `educated Hellas and that he deserves to be taken up as an instructor in the management and culture of human affairs, and that a man ought to regulate the whole of his life by following this poet.` (1977:15)[1]

The importance of Homer's literary and educational pre-eminence cannot have failed to instil in the Greek mind (especially in the minds of boys and youths), the basic concepts of Homeric social values and of the ancient Greek male living within a framework articulated by the concepts of honour and shame. Indeed, the literary heroes were not simply the primary subjects of narrative and dramatic media but were also the objects of cultic worship,[2] and it is of interest that the athletic games in which the Homeric heroes competed[3] later became standard Greek events and played a vital part in Greek public life. Equally pertinent is that the notion of competitive excellence, and the corresponding honour that

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[1] The statistical evidence researched by Finley lends support to his claim and is worth quoting in full (1977:21): "The papyri of Egypt also make it abundantly clear that, in the struggle for literary survival, Homer was without a rival. Of all the scraps and fragments of literary works found in Egypt that had been published by 1963, there are a total of 1,596 books by or about authors whose names are identifiable. This figure represents individual copies, not separate titles. Of the 1,596, nearly one-half were copies of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, or commentaries upon them. The *Iliad* outnumbered the *Odyssey* by about three to one. The next most `popular` author was the orator Demosthenes, with 83 papyri (again including commentaries), followed by Euripides with 77, and Hesiod with 72. Plato is represented by but 42 papyri, Aristotle by 8. These are figures of book-copying among the Greeks in Egypt after Alexander to be sure, but all the evidence indicated that they may be taken as fairly typical of the Greek world generally. If a Greek owned any books—that is, papyrus rolls—he was almost as likely to own the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as anything from the rest of Greek literature." See also Marrou (1977:162ff), who writes: "The gigantic figure of Homer loomed on the horizon from primary-school days. "Homer was not a man but a god" was one of the first sentences that children copied down in their handwriting lessons."

[2] So Nagy 1999:vii; cf. *OCD* 693.

[3] *Il.* 23; *Od.* 8.120ff., 145-148.

accompanied it, was extended from that of merely physical prowess into the spheres of intellectual, oratorical, poetical and dramatic mastery.[1]

Honour and Shame in Greek and Hellenistic Literature[2]

Greek and Hellenistic literature makes more explicit that which is readily accepted in Homeric social values, that the desperate anxiety of the Greek male is to enhance his personal prestige in the constant quest for honour. Isocrates, in seeking to determine the motivation of all men in *all* of their actions, concludes that what is of exclusive import is the pursuit of three things: pleasure, gain or honour.[3] Similarly, in Xenophon, we learn that the obsessive search for honour leads a man to bear all manner of physical exertion and danger, for it is this which sets him above other animals, and for those who exhibit a congenital craving for honour and praise, these are ranked as *true men*.[4] Equally moving is the eulogy of honour pronounced by Pericles in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, "For the love of honour alone is untouched by age, and when one comes to the ineffectual period of life it is not `gain` as some say, that gives the greater satisfaction, but honour."[5] So, analogous to the Homeric social values described above, the yearning for honour stands paramount for the Greek male; the only significant difference being, compared to Homeric society, the overtly categorical and unabashed description of its pursuit.

Honour was, too, considered part of what are termed 'limited goods,' the ancient notion that all goods in life (e.g., honour, respect, status, wealth, prestige, blood, health,

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[1] Cf. Finley 1977:108, 120.
[2] In general, see Joh. Schneider 1972; Walcot 1978; Fisher 1992; Cairns 1993.
[3] *Antid.* 217. Cf. his panegyric to Philip of Macedon, where Isocrates reduces the three incentives of life's objectives to just two: "surpassing joys" and "imperishable honour" (*Phil.* 71).
[4] This is articulated by the poet Simonides in Xenophon's *Hier.* 7.1, 3 (see further *Hier.* 7.1-10).
[5] 2.44.4.

semen, love etc.) existed in finite, limited quantities and were always in short supply.[1] Hence, one man's gain in honour was another man's loss—there was no viable concept of social equality in terms of honour.[2] In this respect, ancient culture is regarded as "agonistic," with contests over honour termed as instances of "challenge-response."[3] Examples of such an attitude from a first-century CE perspective are found in the works of Philo, Josephus, Plutarch, and the apostle John.[4]

Like honour, the concept of shame is equally prevalent in Greek literature, and consonant with the Homeric hero, the social constraints of the fear and the horror of shame propel the Greek male to subsume life itself under the supremacy of the quest for status and prestige. Isocrates declares to his Greek leaders the shame that will accrue if they are seen to lack the courage to pursue a course of conduct that will gain them honour, and that even if one is compelled to risk one's life, the priority of death with honour is preferable to a life of shame.[5] Herodotus elucidates a specific example of such attitudes when he tells the tale of

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[1] See esp. Malina 1993:90-116.

[2] Cf. Plut. (*Mor.* 487) who maintains, "...imitation is the act of one who admires, but rivalry of one who envies. It is for this reason that men love those who wish to become like themselves, but repress and crush those who wish to become their equals." In a desire to alleviate rivalry and jealousy between siblings Plutarch offers the expedient advice that brothers should not seek to acquire honours or power in the same field, but in quite different fields (*Mor.* 486B, cf. 486C). This parallels attitudes in contemporary Greece (Walcot 1978:29) where it has been noted that rivalry between brothers is discouraged among Sarakatsan shepherds by each brother being credited with a specialist skill—one is reckoned best as a cheese-maker, another is a specialist in fattening up the young animals etc.

[3] See C. Barton 2001:32-33, 85-86, 105-108, 119-122, 232-233; Malina 1993:34-44

[4] Philo *Ebr.* 110, "they who deify mortal things neglect the honour due to God...they even gave beasts and plants devoid of reason a share in those honours, which belonged of right only to immortal beings." Jos. *Life* 122-123, "But when John son of Levi....heard that everything was proceeding to my satisfaction, that I was popular with those under my authority and a terror to the enemy, he was in no good humour; and, believing that my success involved his own ruin, gave way to immoderate envy." Plutarch describes the reaction of envy that one may feel upon hearing an outstanding speaker, "As though commendation were money, he feels that he is robbing himself of every bit that he bestows on another" (*Mor.* 44B). Cf. *Mor.* 787D. John the Baptist says of Jesus, "He must increase, I must decrease" (Jn 3:30). Such sentiments are later reiterated by Iamblichus, "People do not find it pleasant to give honour to someone else, for they suppose that they themselves are being deprived of something" (cited in Esler 1998:48). Similar sentiments are found In the OT, cf. Gen 25:29-34; 27:30-40.

[5] *Nic.* 36: "...it is shameful for kings not to have the courage to pursue a course of conduct from which they will gain renown during their lives...Put forth every effort to preserve your own and your state's security, but

the Greek warrior Aristodemus—the only survivor of the three hundred Spartans killed at the battle of Thermopylae, and who had to endure the intolerable social humiliation of such dishonour. As observed in the Homeric context, so now seen in Greek literature, life itself for the Greek warrior-hero, must be inconsequential in the pursuit of honour.[1] Aristodemus was later killed at the battle of Plataea and, according to the judgement of Herodotus, he excelled in valour and deserved to receive honour, but in the eyes of the other warriors his already shameful status precluded any such award.[2]

Relevant to the social values of both honour and shame is the prerequisite notion of such values existing in the public domain and that prestige, or its antithesis, subsist only within their wider social perception.[3] Isocrates notes that great wealth is `mortal` but reputation `immortal,` and that honour, needing the acknowledgment of others, depends on a person's reputation or fame. To this end he encourages all men to seek prestige and great distinction, "accustom yourself to take pleasure in that [society] which will contribute to your advancement and heighten your fame in the eyes of the world."[4]

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if you are compelled to risk your life, choose to die with honour rather than to live in shame." See also Isoc. *Phil.* 132.

[1] See especially Lysias (*Funeral Oration* 79-80) who speaks of those fallen in battle: "...it is fitting to consider those most happy who have closed their lives in risking them for the greatest and noblest ends...their honour is every man's envy...those who have fallen in war are worthy of receiving the same honours as the immortals."

[2] Herodotus *Hist.* 9.71.

[3] Walcot 1978:16, 22.

[4] *Nic.* 29. Equally, it is important to leave one's children a good name (Isoc. *Nic.* 32), whereas the shame of one's father(s) can cause one to despair (Ar. *Birds* 540-542). Strikingly, the vital importance of social perception in the post-Homeric Greek world is observed in a significant development in the concept of its very *nature*; for within Greek literature, and setting it apart from its earlier Homeric framework, there is an apotheosis of "public perception" (φήμη, commonly referred to as "Common Report"). Aeschines makes reference to this numinous quality when he writes of the opinions of Hesiod and Euripides, each of whom refer to "Common Report" in divine terms (Hesiod as a goddess, Euripides as a god), *Tim.* 129; *Fals. leg.* 145. Such an opinion may inform the view of other writers that the most honoured and virtuous of men may, by their public benefactions and largesse, procure immortality (Isoc. *Phil.* 134-135; Diod. Sic. 6.2).

Honour and Envy

The poet Aeschylus, in his play *Agamemnon*, has Clytemnestra pose a basic dilemma for the Greek; the striving after reputation may allow one to acquire prestige and reputation, but in doing so it arouses the envy of others.[1] In one sense, being the recipient of envy is desirable in that it is coupled to the agonistic struggle for honour and so demonstrates an increase in one's own prestige (and, in a positive sense, can urge the envious to seek greater honour for themselves). But in turn, envy can invite resentment and malice, exposing a person to calumny and attack.[2] To the Greek mind envy was all pervasive, and this negative side, if allowed to go unchecked, had a destructive element which was concomitant with the sign of a wicked nature.[3] Plutarch claims of this type of envy that it not only demonstrates a lacuna in the honour of those who envy, but is analogous to hatred, for its ultimate result is contrary to that of friendship.[4] Aristotle writes,

> Envy is a kind of pain at the sight of such good fortune in regard to the things already mentioned; we feel it towards our equals, not with thoughts of getting something for ourselves, but because others have it. We feel it if we have, or think we have, equals; and by 'equals' I mean equals in birth, relationship, age, disposition, distinction, or wealth...Nearly all the actions or possessions which make men desire glory or honour and long for fame, and the favours of fortune, create envy, especially when men long for them themselves, or think that they have a right to them, or the possession of which makes them slightly superior or slightly inferior. And since men strive for honour with those who are competitors, or rivals

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[1] Aesch. *Ag.* 935-936. Plutarch (*Mor.* 91Eff) maintains that *all* human nature produces rivalry, jealousy and envy. On envy and enmity (*inimicitiae*) within a Roman context see Epstein 1987:48-54.

[2] On the concept of *evil-eye* (the malign force unleashed by envy and warded off by the use of amulets etc.) see Derrett 1995 and the bibliog. there (esp. the articles by J. H. Elliot).

[3] Walcot 1978:69. Of the proper place of envy see Isoc. *Panath.* 81-82 who comments upon the nature of the Greek warrior-heroes assembled for the Trojan War.

[4] Plut. (*Mor.* 536F). Consequently, the Greek male may reject any proposition that he may be envious (Plut. *Mor.* 537E).

> in love, in short, with those who aim at the same things, it is these whom are envied above all others. (*Rhet.* 1387b-1388a; ET mine)[1]

Thus, the dichotomy for the Greek male is that while the obsession with personal prestige invariably leads to the public exhibition of wealth and honour, the envy that this necessarily invokes will certainly induce a sense of rivalry but can also result in animosity and possibly hatred.[2] The only way to exorcise oneself from this imbroglio, suggest both Isocrates and Xenophon, is the regular beneficence and largesse of the Greek ἀγαθός.[3]

Aristotle & Notions of Honour

The most significant attempt to provide a rational ethic of honour within the Greek world was that made by Aristotle.[4] He outlines the key components of satisfaction and happiness to include a number of internal and external 'goods;' internal goods being those of mind and body, while external goods consist of noble birth, friends, wealth, and honour.[5] Of the external goods it is honour and the pursuit of honour which he distinguishes as pre-eminent for the Greek male.[6] His work also demonstrates an awareness of the covetous aspect of honour,[7] the nature of envy,[8] and the wider social dimension of honour among the

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[1] For a theoretical discussion of the subject see further, *Rhet.* 1370b-1371a; 1384a; 1387a-1388a.
[2] For the link between envy and material wealth see Plut. *Mor.* 537A, C.
[3] Isoc. *Demon.* 26; *Hel. enc.* 56; Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.19-24; Walcot 1978:34-35, 70.
[4] See esp. Joh. Schneider 1972; Walcot 1978; Fisher 1976, 1992; MacIntyre 1998:57-83.
[5] *Rhet.* 1.5.4ff; *Eth. Nic.* 1.4.3; 1.5.4.
[6] *Eth. Nic.* 4.3.10-11: "Now the greatest external good we should assume to be the thing which we offer as a tribute to the gods, and which is most coveted by men of high station, and is the prize awarded for the noblest deeds; and such a thing is honour, for honour is clearly the greatest of external goods. Therefore the great-souled man is he who has the right disposition with regard to honours and disgraces. And even without argument it is evident that honour is the object with which the great-souled are concerned, since it is honour above all else which great men claim and deserve." Cf. *Eth. Nic.* 4.3.17-18; 4.4.1-6; *Rhet.* 1.11.26; MacIntyre 1998:78ff.
[7] *Eth. Nic.* 8.8.2.
[8] *Rhet.* 2.9.4.

community.[1] In these respects, Aristotle confirms what is sketched above, that the social priority of the Greek male is φιλοτιμία, the craving and desire for honour. However, in a profound transformation of the Homeric and early Greek conception of honour, Aristotle, following Plato, establishes a personal ethical element of "inward honour," the import of which was greater than that of the external goods. Here, this most desired virtue was finally anchored in the moral person and thus a certain type of moral conduct became prerequisite for the esteem a man enjoyed.[2] This high-minded (or "great-souled") man thus possesses honour on the basis of inner worth, and it is for this reason that his fellow-citizens should then show him corresponding honour.[3] The radical nature of such a proposition would most likely be denied by the majority of Greeks (were it to be put to them), for the essence of Aristotle's claim is that the male ἀγαθός is now designated as the δίκαιος.[4] In the opinion of Aristotle, there are now components of honour which are very different from those to be found in the Homeric literature, and include such philosophical or philanthropic actions as the composing of memorials in verse and prose, grants of land, maintenance of the State, and, most especially, expenditure in the service of the gods (votive offerings, public buildings, sacrifices), and the offices of religion generally.[5]

C3. Honour and Shame in the Roman World

The cultural and social values of the Greek and Hellenistic world, through its vigorous military (and cultural) expansion, permeated most of the lands of the Mediterranean basin and had a particular influence upon Roman ideology, imbuing it with

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[1] *Eth. Nic.* 8.14.3.
[2] *Eth. Nic.* 4.3.14-15, 19-22.
[3] MacIntyre 1998:78.
[4] See Adkins 1960:78, 131ff, 153ff; Joh. Schneider 1972:171; MacIntyre 1998:78-80.
[5] *Rhet.* 1.5.9; *Eth. Nic.* 4.2.11.

many of its own cultural traditions.[1] Moreover, the nature and monolithic quality of ancient rhetorical education ensured that all boys (and girls[2]) were influenced by extremely similar cultural material—and such education was not merely considered to be the reserve of the privileged few, for even the poorest considered a certain degree of literacy to be essential.[3] In this respect, the same literary priorities which pervaded Greek and Hellenistic culture[4] were also prevalent in Roman culture. Petronius, Quintillian and Pliny are all unequivocal about the primacy of Homeric poetry for pedagogical purposes and insist that he should be regarded as the fountain-head of all wisdom.[5] After Homer came Euripides, Menander, Demosthenes, and then the Latin writers Virgil (first), then Terence, Cicero, and Horace. In this way, the social values found in the Homeric literature, of which honour and shame are so prominent, had the effect of `imposing` themselves upon the world-view of children from the earliest age. Speaking of young boys, Cicero observes,

> With what earnestness they pursue their rivalries! How fierce their contests! What exultation they feel when they win, and what shame when they are beaten! How they dislike reproach! How they yearn for praise! What labors will they not undertake to stand first among their peers! How well they remember those who have shown them kindness and how eager to repay it! (*Fin.* 5.22.61)

From the outset, a child was taught to admire the classics and to emulate their style, and the concentration on certain classical works (which were expected to be memorized),

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[1] So, M. Goodman 1997:71, 152-56; Shelton 1998:332-333, 346-347, 361-367, 420-421.
[2] For the joint education of girls and boys see A. H. M. Jones 1940:222; Carcopino 1941:105f; Townsend 1972:142; Marrou 1977:266, 274; Stambaugh/Balch 1986:121.
[3] On the education of slaves, Marrou 1977:266. Martial (*Ep.* 9.73.7) provides a witty epigram on the social rise of a poor cobbler whose parents taught him basic literacy themselves.
[4] As above; also, Townsend 1972; S. F. Bonner 1977; Stambaugh/Balch 1986:120f; MacMullen 1990:130ff.
[5] Petron. *Sat.* 5; Quint. 1.8.5; 10.1.46; Pliny *Ep.* 2.14.2; cf. Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.41-44; S. F. Bonner 1977:212-213; Marrou 1977:262; Balsdon 1979:43f.

had the result of moulding a child's thinking for life. In addition, schools, as the educational institutions of a Greco-Roman society, were inseparably bound up with the state religion and students were expected, and even compelled, to take part in religious festivals.[1] Naturally, such social values became disseminated throughout the diverse social strata of the empire.[2]

Honour in the Roman World

The social constraints of honour and shame observed above are equally prominent in the Roman world; indeed, as Carlin Barton notes, "The values of the ancient Romans, especially during the Republic, were overwhelmingly those of a warrior culture" (2001:13). Men lusted after honour and were determined to be seen, and *publicly* acknowledged, as having the social rewards which honour brought—status, respect, power, influence, entourage, genuflection, and, particularly, envy. Cicero observed,

> By nature we yearn and hunger for honor, and once we have glimpsed, as it were, some part of its radiance, there is nothing we are not prepared to bear and suffer in order to secure it. (*Tusc.* 2.24.58)[3]

So, too, Dio Chrysostom assumed without question the proposition that it was the quest for *honour* which stood at the root of male motivation,

> For you will find that there is nothing else, at least in the case of the great majority, that incites a man to despise danger, to endure toils, and to scorn the life of pleasure and ease.

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[1] Marrou 1977:234ff.; Townsend 1972:149.

[2] There are a number of ancient authors who can be identified as mediators of popular culture (Juvenal, Apuleius, Lucian and Plautus). These, through life experiences of being non-elite earlier in their careers, appear to be more sensitive to non-elite viewpoints and concerns (see Meggitt 1998:24-25).

[3] On the craving for honour, see also Cic. *Arch.* 28-29; *Rep.* 5.9; *Fin.* 5.22.64; *Off.* 1.18.61; August. *Civ.* 5.12.

> This certainly is clear: neither you nor anyone else, Greeks or barbarians, who are considered to have become great, advanced to glory or power, for any other reason that you were fortunate enough to have men who lusted after honour. (*Or.* 31.17, 20)[1]

The concept and importance of honour for the first-century Roman was an irreducible fact of life, and not only for the *honestiores*; the same constraints were felt equally upon the *humiliores*, whether it be those existing as slaves, those involved in what were described as the "vulgar" professions, or those simply reliant upon the largesse of the aristocracy for their meagre provision of dole.[2] The honouring of those above one's own social position was both a social function and an everyday experience, and it was certainly the constant expectation of those who were in any respect distinguished. The nature of the honour sought by aristocratic men and women explains its wide-ranging force in society, for honour was essentially intertwined with social power—the power which demarcated one's social ranking relative to others. Consequently, the rivalry for honour within Roman society subsumed all other social power struggles and became overwhelmingly important to its participants. Honour was, in essence, the pre-eminent social value in the Roman world. Roman social historian Jon Lendon asserts, "Honour was a filter through which the whole world was viewed, a deep structure of the Graeco-Roman mind, perhaps the ruling metaphor of ancient society."[3] And, as with Homeric and Greek values, such was the imperative of honour that even life itself was inconsequential in its pursuit. Dio Chrysostom claims that

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[1] Further, *Or.* 31.20 speaks of the rewards of such honour (and see the wider context of vv. 16-22).

[2] On the lower classes, MacMullen (1974:76-77) writes, "[They focussed] their energies on the pursuit of honor rather than economic advantage...Like everyone else, they sought status." Likewise, C. A. Barton observes, "The plebeian was as preoccupied with honor as the patrician, the client as the patron, the woman as the man, the child as the adult" (2001:11). Cf. Lendon 1997:97. A variety of scholars studying European societies between the 14th-19th centuries have found that the moral code of honour shaped lives well down the social scale, and was of importance to artisans, common city dwellers, the socially marginal and even prostitiutes. See Cohen 1992 (and bibliog. there).

[3] 1997:73. Contra Treggiari (1991:313) who conjectures that honour has its roots in Islam. Treggiari's argument is countered by McGinn 1998.

many men had given up their lives simply in order to receive superlative posthumous honour (perhaps in the form of a statue or inscription) or to leave to one's family line an honourable memory.[1]

Dio Chrysostom here also recognizes that, analogous with Homeric and Greek social values, the import of the public perception of one's honour remains vital. In the words of Seneca, honour was "the favourable opinion of good *men*,"[2] the plurality of such opinion demarcating its necessary prerequisite.[3] Roman life was a public affair and the pursuit of honour subsisted under the constant scrutiny of those within one's own social class, who invariably concerned themselves with the reckoning up of a person's honour, relative both to themselves and others. The younger Pliny succinctly describes the quintessence of such honour-based values when he writes, "The truth is, the generality of mankind stand in awe of public opinion."[4] In this respect, a man's honour was the public verdict on his qualities and standing, and the goal for all men, according to Cicero, was to attain a social prestige whereby "men are likely to talk about us for all time."[5] The components of life which most elicited social recognition of honour included the consequences of one's birth (i.e. family and lineage, together with the eminence of the city or town of both one's birth and upbringing);[6] the social position of friends and acquaintances;[1] wealth (provided it came

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[1] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.16, 20, and see Juv. *Sat.* 8.83.
[2] *Ep.* 102.8 (italics mine). Cf. August. *Civ.* 5.18.
[3] Seneca continues (*Ep.* 102.8): "In order to constitute renown, the agreement of *many* distinguished and praiseworthy men is necessary" (italics mine). Cf., Sen. *Ep.* 102.13ff.; August. *Civ.* 5.18; Sall. *Cat.* 7.6.
[4] *Ep.* 3.20.
[5] Cic. *Q Fr.* 1.1.38. Cf. Cic. *Off.* 2.29-32); August. *Civ.* 5.12.
[6] The Classics are replete with indications of the import of good lineage, demonstrating its high social desirability in terms of honour and prestige. On lineage amongst the nobility see Cic. *Sest.* 136-137. In more general terms see Quint. *Inst.* 3.7.10-11; 5.10.24-25; Amm. Marc. 28.2.15; 14.6.7; Cic. *Planc.* 32; *Off.* 2.44; *Q Fr.* 1.1.43-44; *Rosc. Am.* 147; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 44.8; Tac. *Ann.* 4.44; Juv. *Sat.* 8.30-31; 8.45-50; 8.272-275; Jos. *Ant.* 14.8-10. The NT also provides many such examples: the lineage of Jesus (Mt 1:1-17, Lk 3:23-38), the additional details of his immediate family (Mt 13:54; Mk 6:3), and Paul's emphasis and pride in his own lineage (Phil 3:4-6; Rom 11:1). In contrast, there are also examples of the corporate castigation of whole

from reputable sources—the most socially preferable, and financially remunerative, being in the form of landed estates);[2] civic status (that of a senator, equestrian, decurion, high-ranking military office, or at least a citizen; below these came freedmen and slaves);[3] the size and prestige of one's home; the number of slaves and clients;[4] and a range of miscellaneous items (such as the clothes worn, the food eaten, the banquets given etc.[5]).[6] Public honour was granted in the form of civic recognition—Dio Chrysostom, in particular provides a large number of examples of how benefactors were honoured.[7] Statues constituted the highest honour for they had a certain sanctity, to erase the names of citizens carved on them meant to inflict shame upon them (*Or.* 31). Other honours included portraits and inscription, proclamations, public burials, games celebrated in someone's honour or memory, gifts or generous receptions, invitations to the public table of the city, or front seats at the theatre. This list also demonstrates how patronage could be transformed into public status.

Equally, for the Roman male, one's *moral reputation* was an integral facet of one's position in society and was a significant quality by which public perception conferred honour. Moral laxity or disrepute conferred dishonour, and avoidance of this was a prime

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communities and people-groups (the people of Nazareth in Jn 1:46, and the antipathetical distinction of Judean and Samaritan in Jn 4:9).

[1] See Pliny *Ep.* 6.8; Cic. *Arch.* 31.

[2] For the honour brought by wealth, Cic. *Off.* 1.138; on advantages and disadvantages of wealth, *Off.* 2.55, 63. Cicero (*Off.* 1.150f) also distinguishes those trades he considers vulgar (tax-collecting, usury, hired workmen, wholesale merchants, mechanics, etc.), as opposed to those of worth (medicine, architecture, and teaching; with agriculture the most highly prized). Any small scale trade was also vulgar; although large-scale trade may be worthy of respect. See also, Dio Chrys. 52.25.7.

[3] Juv. *Sat.* 97-105. Cf. also Tac. *Ann.* 2.33. The semantic root of *Honestiores* is connected with *honor* or *honos*, the reference being apparently to the 'honour' or esteem which attaches to members of the higher orders, whether for offices held or for high social standing, so Garnsey 1970:223.

[4] On patronage see below.

[5] On ostentatious apparel, Amm. Marc. 14.6.9; on food, Juv. *Sat.* 6.300-305; on eating indulgences, Pliny *Ep.* 2.6.

[6] With relevance to the above list, the ancients developed the *progymnasmata*, a number of rules and exercises which describe how to praise someone in terms such as these. See further: Hock/O'Neil 1986; Neyrey 1994; Kennedy 1994.

[7] *Or.* 31; 44; C. P. Jones 1978:26-35, 105-14.

focus for all men concerned with the struggle of maintaining or increasing their personal social standing.[1] But private and public morality were often sharply distinguished, for a man could be unconcerned about his moral probity provided it was hidden from the public domain.[2] Of necessity therefore, was the virtue of self-control or self-restraint in the quest for honour (σωφροσύνη)—a quality thought to be supreme amongst the cardinal virtues.[3] And such was its prerequisite that the aristocracy were trained in self-control almost from birth, for to exhibit failure in this aspect of one's demeanour, was liable to bring acute dishonour.[4] But if lack of self-control was always construed as the 'internal' threat to one's own honour, then insult, and most especially public insult, was the critical 'external' menace. One's reputation could most certainly be damaged by the calumny, abusive remarks, or contemptuous acts of one's peers,[5] and it could be ruined entirely by the reproach of one's social superiors. This was also true of the outward behaviour of members of one's immediate or extended family, for the consequences of shameful behaviour extended beyond the individual to the corporate group. Thus, Cicero demonstrates acute anxiety over his brother's actions (as governor of Asia), for these are intimately related to his own personal reputation and status.[6] Conversely, the high honour accorded one member of a family extended to all. Dio Chrysostom reflects with admiration the great honour he

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[1] Cic. *Rep.* 5.4; *Part. Or.* 23.79, 26.91-92.

[2] Pliny (*Ep.* 3.20) articulates this well when he remarks, "How few have the same concern for honesty in secret as in public. Many stand in awe of bad reputation, few of conscience."

[3] In Homer σωφροσύνη means 'shrewdness,' but by classical times it had acquired a strong sense of 'self-control.' Cf. Cic. *Flac.* 28, "In home life praise for self-restraint was the aim, in public life praise for impressiveness."

[4] Cicero admonishes his brother over the public report that he has difficulty containing his anger (*Q Fr.* 1.1.38), "...to hold one's tongue and retain one's sway over mental perturbation and resentment, that, though not a proof of perfect wisdom, is at any rate a mark of no slight natural ability."

[5] On personal enmity in the Roman world see Epstein 1987. Such actions would include the circulation of disreputable letters.

[6] He writes (*Q Fr.* 1.1.43-44), "But if it was you who helped me more than any other living man to win a highly honoured name, you will surely also exert yourself more than others to enable me to preserve that name." See further *Q Fr.* 1.1.12-13, 17; Sen. *Ben.* 5.19.5.

feels to have received through the prestige of his parents, grandfathers, brothers, and other ancestors and relatives.[1] Hence, honour existed as a social sanction; the fear of its loss regulated social norms. The reciprocity of favours and honours, together with the deference and duty of gratitude demanded of one's social betters, enforced a cultural framework circumscribed by this crucial social value.

Honour, Government and Patronage[2]

In Roman society, honour, power, and ideology were inseparably bound. As is evidenced above, the prime motivational factors for men were delineated by the pursuit of honour—for honour was a form of power over others, a coercive force even, to achieve one's social aims (either for benevolence or otherwise). So, too, honour had broad significance for Roman imperial government for it could be used, on the one hand, as a sublime tool of leadership to be admired, but on the other, as a mechanism of tyranny, mingling notions of fear with the expectation of peremptory obedience to state authority.[3] The emperor and the governing elite profited immeasurably from the fact that Greeks and Romans were brought up in an environment whereby one felt bound by notions of honour—where favours were viewed in terms of reciprocal demands, and where one felt shame at any departure from, what were essentially, unwritten laws. Simply put, honour was part-and-parcel of the daily business of imperial government and, more widely, of the efficient

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[1] *Or* 44.3. Cf. Plut. *Cat. Min.* 39.4; Tac. *Ann.* 16.17; Pliny *Ep.* 5.11.

[2] For extensive insight into patron-client relations, Gellner/Waterbury 1977; Eisenstadt/Roniger 1984; Wallace-Hadrill 1989; Chow 1992; Winter 1994; Hanson/Oakman 1998; *OCD* 1126 (and the bibliography there). In general see also Judge 1960; Stambaugh/Balch 1986; Garnsey/Saller 1987; Lendon 1997. For a critique of the importance of patron-client relationships see Meggitt (1998:167-168).

[3] See P. A. Brunt 1990:288-323; Moxnes 1993:174. Lendon writes, "Honour...acts as a cloak or lubricant to other forms of power...Honour was useful as a rhetoric of concealment" (1997:24-25).

workings of Roman society. From the lofty heights of the Principate downwards, men used honour to secure the obedience and loyalty of those ranked below them, and this mutually beneficent system of patronage provided much of the cohesive force of Roman social stability.[1] Roman society was, as the title of Jon Lendon's 1997 monograph reminds us, an Empire of honour.

Patron-client relationships allowed access to certain benefits which may have been generally limited otherwise—honour, protection, and material benefits being counted among them. The patron gained honour through the widespread knowledge that he could sustain a large body of clients or retainers through his "generosity," and the client gained honour by being associated with such a figure.[2] The breaking of this bond could result in the potential shaming of the other.[3] The basis of the patron-client relationship was the assumption that the patron had, and controlled, access to political, economic or cultural resources that the client wanted or needed. The means by which the client gained access to them was not through appeals to formal bureaucracy, but by the manipulation of personal relationships and reciprocity.[4] From the lowest of the *humiliores* up to the great aristocrats there were few who did not feel themselves bound to someone more powerful above them by the obligations of respect.[5] However high a man might climb in the Roman hierarchy, there was

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[1] Judge (1960) and de Ste Croix (1981:364) extol the importance of patronage in holding the Roman empire together and suggest that it was the secret to the integration of the Roman empire. Although not all would agree with such an assessment, many have recognized the influence of patronage in Roman society on politics, legal proceedings, and literary activities. Informal relations of reciprocity "enforced" by the social constraints of honour and shame could also bind persons of equal status into "colleague contracts" (though a significant form of social interaction in the first-century CE, most tended to be of limited duration and for a specific purpose, mostly trade). For a richly detailed and illuminating text on the gaining and use of the system of patronage, see Pseudo-Cicero *Handbook of Electioneering*.

[2] For the linking of patronage and honour, see Jos. *Ant.* 18.151; Mart. *Ep.* 10.73; Stambaugh/Balch 1986:64.

[3] On the asymmetrical character of patronage, see esp. Moxnes 1991:241-268.

[4] Garnsey/Saller 1987:152-153.

[5] Though patrons did not enter into relationships with their social inferiors indiscriminately. See Meggitt 1998:146ff., 167-68; Garnsey/Saller 1987:148-59.

always someone above him to claim his homage, and there was in fact no-one in the Empire, save the emperor alone, who recognised none greater than himself.

The patron for his part was bound by honour to occasionally welcome his client to his house, to invite him from time to time to his table,[1] to come to his assistance, and to present him with gifts.[2] Dio Chrysostom offers insight into the various motives for public benefactions on the part of the rich. One such motif was concern for general welfare. Desire for repute and honour was a very important motive for patronage, so much so that the term φιλοτιμία developed the meaning of public munificence.[3] In some respects, though, the patron-client relationship degenerated into a cheap parody of the oriental courts whereby the patrons surrounded their presence with paid menials who were expected to fawn over them and beg for favours.[4] The adoption of incorrect attitudes towards one's patron could easily result in his disregarding any sense of obligation, and such is the situation described by Martial when he bemoans the loss of his dole due to his dishonourable conduct towards his patron—he greeted his patron by his real name instead of the more honourable epithet, "my lord."[5] Both Martial and Juvenal give vivid portraits of the humiliation which permeated the lives of many clients. Some of them, teachers and men of letters, were forced to grovel

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[1] Pliny *Ep.* 3.12. For a satirical look at such invitations, Mart. *Ep.* 4.26; 4.68; 10.27.3; 13.123. An example of aristocratic dining is described in the NT (Mark 6), where Herod gave a banquet for his "high officials, military commanders and the leading men of Galilee." The narrative then details the entrapment of Herod, within the perceived cultural notions of honour and shame, and the subsequent death of John the Baptist, despite the "great distress" that this caused the host (v. 26). Food was often stored not as a result of rational economic choice, but in order to have an abundance available for feasts (lavish hospitality being a token of the honourable man). Cf. Walcot 1970:8.

[2] On gifts, Mart. *Ep.* 10.73; 12.12. To the poorest clients, the patron distributed either food (*sportula*, carried away in a basket), or more often, to avoid the trouble this entailed, small gifts of money. By the time of the mid first-century CE these customs had become standardized so that a *sportula* "tariff" had become established at twenty-five sesterces per head per day. See Mart. *Ep.* 1.59 (and Loeb note b.); 6.88; Juv. *Sat.* 1.119-121.

[3] *Or.* 46; C. P. Jones 1978:104-14.

[4] Clients were bound to wait their turn patiently in order of social status, so Juv. *Sat.* 1.95-126. In this regard Carcopino (1941:172) claims, "Each morning, therefore, Rome awoke to the coming and going of clients discharging these customary politenesses." On the importance of the size of a patron's slaves and clients, Juv. *Sat.* 7.141f; 1.95-126; Amm. Marc. 14.6.12-13; Tac. *Ann.* 3.55.

[5] *Ep.* 6.88.

before their patrons simply because they were poor.[1] Others were poverty-stricken and were forced to rely almost completely on the small handouts they received from their patrons.[2] In sum, the emperor and his subjects inhabited a world articulated in terms of honour and honouring, reciprocity and deference. Viewing the world in such terms certainly made ruling the empire easier and, for all but the indigent, probably made both living in it and obeying it, more tolerable.

C4. Summary

This section reveals that within the cultures of the ancient world the question of one's honour was of paramount import for the individual. Where, in modern Western society, one might talk of the basic rights of the citizen not to be abused or exploited or treated violently, the ancients often preferred to express such ideas in terms of honour and shame. They spoke frequently of the lessening of one's general standing in the community, or of the deep shame of being treated like a woman, a slave, or another inferior being.

Superlative honour resided within the notion of deity, for it was an expectation that the pantheon of gods would receive consummate honour.[3] But honour resided, too, among

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[1] Juv. *Sat.* 7.

[2] This, often desperate, situation is articulated by Martial (*Ep.* 1.59) with his typical satirical wit. The indigent were forced to run around their respective cities in order to reach the homes of a number of patrons and so secure as many *sportulae* as possible, Juv. *Sat.* 3.126-130; Pliny *Ep.* 3.12.2; Carcopino 1941:172.

[3] Individual or national disrespect towards the gods was thought to bring forth divine retribution in the form of censure, death, or military humiliation, see Cicero *Div.* 1.82-84; *Nat De* 2.3.8; Polybius (6.56.6-12; Sall. *Iug.* 14.19; Hor. *Carm.* 3.6.5; Verg. *Aen.* vi.791-807. On supplication to appease angry gods, Livy 3.7.7-8; on natural disaster as a divine sign, Barnes 1968:38; on the reciprocity of piety and military victory, Livy (5.51.4-5) provides the clearest example, "...yet so manifest has at this time the divine purpose been in the affairs of Rome, that I for one should suppose it no longer possible for men to neglect the worship of the gods. For consider these past few years in order, with their successes and reverses; you will find that all things turned out well when we obeyed the gods, and ill when we spurned them." Livy (5.16.11; 5.51.5-10; 25.1.8) and Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 7.11.7) outline the Roman perspective that it is the gods who preserve their Empire; cf. P. A. Brunt 1990:288-297. Augustus in particular bestowed much honour toward the gods in terms of temples built, gifts

men, and the man of honour was construed as strong, self-controlled, skilled in conflict, and proficient in counsel and strategy. In the lust for praise and glory all manner of danger and toil was undergone; indeed, such was the terror and fear of shame that honour was to be defended at all costs, and even life itself was considered to be inconsequential in its preservation or augmentation. But the man of honour may also be envied, a position which could invite resentment and malice, and so produce calumny, denigration, or assault—all of which were done with the express purpose of causing shame. Consequently, the male may often feel insecure over questions of his honour, and for all but the very few, male insecurity could manifest itself in rivalry, antagonism, opposition, aggression or even verbal and physical hostility.

The components of life which elicited honour in the first-century CE included one's birth (lineage/family/town/city); social position of friends and acquaintances; wealth; social location; the size of one's retinue (soldiers/clients/slaves); and a number of miscellaneous items (clothes worn/banquets given etc.). Success was imperative, and with it the necessity of public perception leading to the good opinion of others. Conversely, failure could lead only to shame. The wider context of male honour involves the family and community, for the male had an obligation to protect his kin-group and any neglect or inadequacy was equivalent to cowardice (so bringing dishonour). There were also social constraints of honour and shame involving the corporate identity of the state vis-à-vis other nations.

The placing of honour within a personal ethic is found in the writings of Aristotle. It is also found in the NT, where it is anchored in the moral person on the basis of personal ('inner') worth, very often in relation to one's integrity before God. It is hinted at in certain

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dedicated, and games given, *Res gest. divi Aug.* 27(19), 29(20.4, 21.2, 22.2), 31(24), 37(App. 2, 3). The *honour* of Augustus was also related to the *pax Romana*, *op. cit.* 11; 25 (12.2).

Greco-Roman contexts wherein there exists overt criticism if one's outward public morality is not comparable with that found in private.

Power, or power relations, could be constituted in religious forms as well as political forms (or what are inseparably the "politico-religious").[1] Such power relations also enhanced the dominance of local elites over the populace, of cities over other cities, and of Romans and Greeks over other indigenous cultures. That is, religios ritual was a major part of the web of power that formed the fabric of society and stabilized the religious "order" of the world.[2] Hence, there was mutual coherence between ritual and symbolism. The system of ritual was carefully structured allowing the symbolism to evoke a picture of the relationship between the emperor and the gods; but the ritual was also structuring, imposing a definition of the world.

Overall, then, this short study delineates the importance of honour-based values for the individual, between individuals or groups, and between cities, states and nations. It recognizes the extent to which the drive for personal honour operated strongly amongst the vast majority of men, especially those engaged in public life, and even more, the extent to which the loss (or potential loss) of honour aroused the very deepest feelings. Greeks and Romans were lovers of honour, and competitive in their quest for privilege and esteem;[3] any attack on one's τιμή was an attack on the very basis of one's life and well-being.

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[1] Mellor (1981:1026) claims that religion was so deeply connected with the political life of cities that "belief and disbelief were political acts". Cf. Helgeland 1978:1471; Hopkins 1978:198; Wardman 1982:12; Hendrix 1986:301.

[2] Horsley (1997:23) maintains, "The implications are hardly mysterious or difficult to discern. (Political power rests not only in armies, taxes, and administrative apparatus.) Power can be constructed or constituted in religious forms, of temples, shrines, images, sacrifices, and festivals. Not only does power order, sustain, threaten, and dominate, but people also desire order, sustenance, direction, and protection."

[3] Neyrey 1998:33; Esler 1994; Malina 2001.

The Semantics of Honour and Shame

A survey of terms for honour in biblical lexicography reveals that the two most comprehensive roots in the New Testament are τιμή and δόξα (the cognates of the latter being particularly wide and including ἔνδοξος[1] and κενόδοξος[2]).[3] In addition, the καύχημα word-group also contains the nuance of making public claims to honour (see further below, and section 2.4.4),[4] and, likewise, the semantic range of the compound verb ἐπαινέω overlaps with honour when it is construed to, "give a public mark of esteem."[5] A lexicography of "shame" would include, in addition to ἀτιμία, forms and cognates related to the verbs ἀσχημονέω,[6] αἰσχύνω[7] and ἐντρέπω.[8] It is important, too, to determine exactly what may be *relevant* to discussions of honour, and this need not be limited to obvious lexical occurrences. For example, within a wider social context (including concepts of social-exchange such as challenge-response and reverence), Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey find the semantic field of honour and shame to include the following,

> *honor*: nouns such as glory, blamelessness, repute, fame, and verbs such as to honor, to glorify, to spread the fame of, to choose, to find acceptable, to be pleased with
>
> *shame*: nouns such as disgrace, and dishonour, and verbs such as to shame, to be ashamed, to feel ashamed

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[1] LSJ *sv.* "held in esteem or honour; of high repute."

[2] Κενόδοξος (only in Gal 5:26) and κενοδοξία (only in Phil 2:3) express the vain desire for honour; cf. UBS *sv* "conceited, boastful;" L&N *sv* "falsely proud;" Downing 1999:63, "empty or false honor, fame, or respect."

[3] For word studies see Kittel/von Rad *TDNT* 2.232-255; Aalen *NIDNTT* 2.44-48 (on δόξα); Joh. Schneider *TDNT* 8.169-180; Aalen *NIDNTT* 2.48-52 (on τιμή).

[4] See Moxnes 1993:167; Barrett 1986; Forbes 1986.

[5] *NIDNTT* 3.816.

[6] UBS *sv* "shameless act(s); shame of nakedness;" L&N *sv* "indecent behaviour, shameful state." See also, Link *NIDNTT* 3.562-564.

[7] In his *TDNT* article on αἰσχύνη...κτλ, Bultmann recognized no significant differences between this and the compound verbs ἐπαισχύνω and καταισχύνω (*TDNT* 1.189ff.).

[8] LSJ *sv.* "Shame, reproach; a turning towards;" UBS/L&N *sv* "shame."

> *dishonor*: to scorn, to despise, to revile, to reproach, to insult, to blaspheme, to deride, to mock
>
> *intention to challenge*: nouns such as test and trap, and verbs such as to tempt and to spy on; all questions must be examined in this light
>
> *perceptions of being challenged or shamed*: nouns such as vengeance, wrath, anger
>
> *gestures*: to bow down before, to reverence, to bend the knee. (1991:46)

The number of English terms and concepts, then, is quite extensive and the overall semantic range of the few Greek words is much broader than that delineated by the simple English expressions, "honour" or "shame." Within the genuine Pauline corpus, these terms abound and yet there has been little formal analysis of the use and function of such terms. Indeed, it may be surprising to many that, statistically, the combined lexicography of honour-shame terms within the corpus is more prevalent than those word-groups which are considered to form the predominant Pauline themes, such as "righteousness," "grace," "law," "faith," or "S/spirit."[1] The language and function of "honour-shame" in Paul is perhaps a major theme which has hitherto been neglected.

The Greek τιμή in the sense of "to proffer respect or reverence or to esteem" certain individuals is seen in Rom 2:7, 10; 9:21;12:10 and Phil 2:29;[2] while the presenting of τιμή to the emperor, in the sense of dignity or lordship, is found in Rom 13:7. Elsewhere, τιμή has the nuance of "dignity" when it is predicated of certain body parts in 1 Cor 12:23-24; and also the meaning of "price" in 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23 (cf. Col 2:23).[3] The general meanings of δόξα as `honour,` `fame,` `repute` and in the case of the verb `to

[1] A statistical analysis of the occurrence of lexical forms and cognates of the above word-groups within the genuine Pauline corpus is as follows: "grace" 91x; "righteousness" 94x; "law" 121x; "S/spirit" 139x; and "faith" 154x. In contrast, honour-shame terminology occurs 183x (sixty-percent of which is found evenly divided between 1 and 2 Corinthians). Statistical data is derived from Gramcord software. The lexical data is obviously removed from its syntax, but the statistics are interesting to note nonetheless.

[2] Cf. 1 Tim 5:17; 6:1; 2 Tim 2:20.

[3] Τιμή predicated of God is found only in 1 Timothy (1:17; 6:16).

honour/praise,' and the special uses 'to seek or receive honour,' all belong to typical Greek usage and demonstrate that it has a semantic overlap with τιμή—in such cases the two may function as synonyms (NT usage, a continuation of that found in the LXX, derives from the Hebrew *kabōd* meaning glory or honour).[1] This semantic overlap is observed both within Pauline literature (Rom 1:21; 2:7, 10) and Greco-Roman writing,[2] and of interest in Paul are the texts which affirm δόξα within a wider social setting as "the opinion which others have of one" (LSJ *sv*), that is, one's social reputation (1 Cor 11:17; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:17; Phil 3:21; 1 Thess 2:20). Δόξα predicated of God and/or Christ is extensive in Paul, as is that δόξα which is predicated of the Christ-follower either in the present,[3] or as an eschatological gift[4] (in light of which Paul can urge a sense of virtuous ethical behaviour in order to bring δόξα to God[5]). Furthermore, the Christ-movement of Thessalonica is said to be the δόξα of Paul (1 Thess 2:20), and the ministry of which he is a part, that of the new covenant, is said to have an overwhelming δόξα compared to that of the old (2 Cor 3; in this sense the glory/honour once predicated of the OT Israelites is now redundant, for in the present they simply glory/honour in their "shame," a euphemism for their circumcised genitalia (Rom 9:4; Phil 3:19)).

In the Pauline lexicography of "shame" the predominant use is of shameful behaviour or practices (Rom 6:21; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:35; 2 Cor 4:2; cf. Eph 5:12; Titus 1:11). But there is also a sense of feeling disappointment or humiliation (2 Cor 9:4; 10:8; Rom 1:16; 5:5), or lack of confidence (Rom 1:16-17; Phil 1:20). So, too, the evil powers of

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[1] See BAGD 204.2/3; *NIDNTT* 2.44-48.
[2] See BAGD 817 for texts.
[3] Rom 2:10; 8:30; 1 Cor 11:7; 2 Cor 3:18; 6:8.
[4] Rom 5:2; 8:17, 18, 21, 30; 1 Cor 2:7; 15:43; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:17; Phil 3:21; 1 Thess 2:12; cf. the believers' hope "hope of glory," Col 1:27; Eph 1:18; 2 Thess 2:14; 2 Tim 2:10.
[5] 1 Cor 6:20; 10:31.

the world will be overcome and put to shame through a great eschatological vindication (Rom 9:33; 10:11; 1 Cor 1:17ff.; 2:6; 15:24; cf. 2 Tim 1:12).[1]

Καυχάομαι and its cognates are common in the NT and occur primarily in the Pauline literature, especially in the Corinthian correspondences.[2] Although typically translated simply as "boasting," the semantic range of the word-group is quite wide and includes, "take pride in/rejoice/be glad" (UBS); "to express an unusually high degree of confidence in someone, or something being exceptionally noteworthy" (L&N); "glory/pride oneself in or about a person or thing" (BAGD). Within the context of 1 Corinthians, simply translating καυχάομαι as "boasting," with all its modern negative connotations, may miss the fact that it actually contains the nuance of *making a public claim to honour*, something entirely acceptable within first-century Greco-Roman culture.[3] This is most evident in 1 Cor 4:7ff., where the Corinthians apparently "boast" in respect of their putative riches, kingship, wisdom, and strength, and in the fact that through these they are held in honour (ἔνδοξος, 4:10).

In general terms, a public claim to honour was a tool for socially acceptable self-aggrandizement and public display; but such a claim required a proper foundation and a suitable basis. If this existed then appropriate honour was granted. If not, it represented the action of a person who, in the eyes of those he had challenged socially (and in view of a public audience), had gone beyond the limits of which the foundation of the claim allowed

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[1] See Kee 1974.

[2] Καυχάομαι and cognates (καύχημα, καύχησις, κατακαυχάομαι) occur 55x in the genuine Pauline corpus, thirty-nine occurrences of which are in 1 & 2 Cor. See NIDNTT *sv*; *TDNT* 1.189-191, 3.649ff.; Dewey 1985; Barrett 1986; Forbes 1986; P. Marshall 1987; Moxnes 1988a; M. M. Mitchell 1991; Pogoloff 1992:212ff.

[3] On the personal declarations extolling one's own laudable characteristics, see the many examples in Danker 1982, and see esp. the *Res Gestae* of Augustus, a classic claim to honour detailing the achievements of the "divine" emperor and which were to be inscribed on his mausoleum in Rome. Chapters 34 and 35 in particular deal in simple terms with the equation that great achievements merit great honours.

him to make.[1] Further, it presupposed the social perception that the individual had not balanced his verbal claims with socially understood reality. Disproportionate public honour claims, together with the inability to sustain those claims (perhaps perceived directly as a threat to another's honour), necessarily brought about the required social response: the claim to honour was rejected and the boaster was shamed.[2] But public honour claims were not always wrong; it simply depended upon the *basis* for such a claim.[3]

Henceforth in this study, καυχάομαι will be translated either as *a public claim to honour*, or as "boasting" (placed in inverted commas), as a reminder of the wider linguistic nuances of the verb and its cognates.

Ensuing Format

The analysis of 1 Corinthians which follows has been divided into four chapters. Chapter One will begin with some preliminary material which will be helpful in elucidating various aspects of the social context of the discussion. This will fall into four parts beginning with a review of a number of recent and influential studies on 1 Corinthians. The second part will examine what is known of the apostle Paul in light of ancient prosopography (and notions of honour), and will be followed by a cursory examination of ancient crucifixion from the perspective of the shame that this involved. (Both parts will thus be a valuable resource at various points of the exegetical discussion.) Finally, there will be an attempt to give some estimate of the numbers of Christ-followers at Corinth and to

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[1] See the analyses by Moxnes of boasting and honour and shame in Paul's letter to the Romans (1988, 1988a; esp. his conclusion, 1988a:70).
[2] See Dewey 1985.
[3] See Barrett 1986:363ff.

proffer suggestions for community meetings vis-à-vis smaller house-group type settings and larger gatherings of the whole assembly. Chapter Two will focus on 1 Cor 1-4 and will examine such topics as the partisanship evident within the text, the emphasis upon wisdom and rhetoric, and Paul's response in highlighting the paradox of the cross as the vital framework for Christ-centred thought and action. Chapter Three will analyse the social tensions within the Corinthians Christ-movement and will cover chapters 5-10 of Paul's letter. Finally, Chapter Four will examine the problems of worship and belief within the community as evidenced in 1 Cor 11-15. Limitations of space negate a comprehensive commentary on each chapter or verse, rather, the terms, motifs and themes which are central in the text will receive attention from the perspective of an honour-shame framework. The cross referencing from various aspects of the Greco-Roman and Hebrew-Judean social contexts will provide a pool of comparative data, and the various insights from ancient literary ethnography and ancient and contemporary anthropology will be evaluated in light of the biblical evidence. This dissertation seeks to prove that the text yields a multifaceted description of the dynamics of honour and shame at work within the Corinthian Christ-movement—dynamics which have led to a variety of problems, and which the apostle now endeavours to resolve.

Chapter 1

SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Recent Scholarship on 1 Corinthians

The central thesis of this dissertation, i.e., the presenting of a fresh reading of 1 Corinthians through the lens of honour-shame, is one which has not, thus far in Pauline scholarship, been examined. Hence, there are no monographs or journal articles with which to critically engage. There are, however, a variety of recent works on 1 Corinthians which explore various social contexts of the letter and which overlap, in part, aspects of the thesis here. Rather than presenting a *critical* review of such recent scholarship at this stage, the specific points of agreement or disagreement with various aspects of the works highlighted below will be left to the relevant sections of the exegesis on 1 Corinthians (chapters 2-4). The thesis presented here is, in any case, in broad agreement with many facets of the monographs which follow. [1]

Rhetorical Criticism (M. M. Mitchell, Pogoloff & Litfin)

Over the last three decades an analysis of the rhetorical forms of ancient letter-writing has come to the fore and this has had a profound impact on NT studies, particularly in analysing the letters of Paul. Early studies of ancient papyri letters undertaken from the 1900's onwards demonstrated that Paul's works would certainly have been recognized as real letters, but were distinctive within the genre due to their length and aspects of their content (see Deissmann 1927; Doty 1969, 1973; Stowers 1986, Weima 1994). The closely related study of setting Paul's letters within the context of ancient rhetoric, a vital ingredient

[1] On earlier studies relevant to 1 Corinthians see esp. Chow 1992:12-28

of Greco-Roman education and public life, has been particularly fruitful—the groundbreaking study in this regard was made by Hans Dieter Betz in 1979, whose commentary on Galatians brought new and fresh insights from classical rhetoric into Pauline scholarship. Analysing 1 Corinthians from this same perspective has been especially profitable. Individual chapters or sections of the letter have been analysed in this way (Smit 1993; Watson 1993), but the most detailed attempt to analyse the letter as a whole from a perspective of rhetorical forms and techniques has been that of Margaret Mitchell (1991). She presents a cogent case that 1 Corinthians is an example of deliberative rhetoric; an appeal for unity, employing typical terms and phrases appropriate to an ancient discussion of factionalism and concord.[1]

The work of rhetorical criticism has also been taken up by both Duane Litfin (1994) and Stephen Pogoloff (1992) in their studies of σοφία in 1 Corinthians 1-4 (see further below, section 2.3). Litfin notes that rhetorical eloquence was held in high esteem in first-century cities like Corinth[2] and that Paul employs the σοφία of the cross to counteract an intellectual arrogance centred upon the σοφία of rhetorical eloquence. He suggests that it was a preoccupation with the latter which had caused divisions both within the community itself and between some of the Corinthian Christ-followers and Paul.[3] In a similar way, Pogoloff examines the relationship in the ancient world between status and eloquence; for rhetorical sophistication correlates directly with social status in that it is the socially or politically powerful who have been suitably educated in the art of rhetoric.[4] He notes that Paul's objections in 1 Cor 1-4 centre upon the attempt by some of the Corinthians to distinguish between Apollos and himself in terms of their rhetorical ability and to see this as

[1] For a critique of Mitchell see Witherington 1995 (esp. p. 47, n. 140; 58).
[2] 1994:109-134.
[3] 1992:244.
[4] 1992:129-172.

a reflection on the two apostles' respective statures as men of wisdom.[1] Paul thus employs his own rhetorical skill to urge the Corinthians to reject the worldly wisdom of the rhetorically eloquent and to accept, instead, the wisdom of God as manifest in and through the cross of Christ. Together, the contributions of Mitchell, Litfin and Pogoloff have highlighted numerous important aspects of the social dimensions to the conflict in Corinth.

***Patronage* (Chow)**

First-century CE Corinth, as a city refounded upon a Roman model, would certainly have had a social framework structured around a graduated hierarchy of patron-client relations (see above, section C3), and these are likely to have existed within the Christ-movement there also. John Chow (1992; and to some extent A. D. Clarke[2]) has drawn attention to the social importance of the power of patronage and recognizes that various patron-client obligations between Christ-followers may well have been the source of some tension within the community, especially if these were deemed to undermine the sense of "brotherhood" amongst believers.[3] In addition, patron-client relationships may have existed between Christ-followers and non-believers, with the former perhaps unavoidably caught-up in obligations that were contrary to the ethos of the community. Chow also analyses the Corinthian factionalism by use of a model of "networks"—an examination of how individuals could be involved in more than one relationship or belonging to overlapping groups (for example, an individual could function at the same time, as both patron to one person and yet client of another).[4] Like the work of Litfin and Pogoloff above, the insightful

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[1] 1992:173-196
[2] 1993:31-36; 93ff.
[3] 1992:83-112.
[4] 1992:83ff.

work of both Chow and Clarke on patronage and social structures allows them to explicate well the social context of particular sections of 1 Corinthians.

***Feminist Perspectives* (Fiorenza & Wire)**

An influential contribution to 1 Corinthians has been made by feminist theologians Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983) and Antoinette Wire (1990). From their reading of Gal 3:28, both see Paul's early vision of the Christ-movement to have made redundant any distinctions of race, class and gender and to have abolished what they see as a framework of patriarchal domination.[1] So, too, from the recognition that Paul's wisdom christology would have been particularly attractive to women (since Wisdom, σοφία, is a female figure)[2] both maintain that this may have encouraged the prominence of women as prophets within the community and that these would have held particular influence.[3] With regard to 1 Cor 11:2-16, Wire develops Fiorenza's reading of Gal 3:28 to suggest that female prophets appealed to this early tradition in claiming that all believers embodied God's image in Christ, and that, having taken on the same common identity, all are therefore entitled to pray and prophesy without regard to gender.[4] Wire then sees in Paul's later argument that man alone is the image of God (1 Cor 11:7; Paul normally understands *Christ* as the image of God), a reflection of a more traditional patriarchal subordination of women; in itself, a reaction to the degree of independence claimed by the Corinthian women prophets. Wire also makes particular use of considerations of honour and shame (1 Cor 11:5-6; 14:35), positing that the women prophets understood their honour in terms of their new baptismal status in sharing

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[1] Cf. Fiorenza 1983:205-220; 140-154.
[2] *idem* 1983:130-140
[3] *idem* 1983:226-233.
[4] 1990:126.

Christ's image; they were not of low social status but would certainly have recognized and responded to such considerations.

***Relations of Friendship* (P. Marshall)**

In analysing Paul's financial relations with the Christ-movement in terms of friendship, Peter Marshall (1987) has made a recent major contribution to scholarship on 1 Corinthians, particularly with respect to 1 Cor 9.[1] Despite the fact that common terms of friendship do not appear in the letter, Marshall notes that a number of conventions governing the conduct of friendship are present, and that these are related to typical reciprocal forms of giving and receiving (where the acceptance of a gift established friendship and the refusal of a gift could provoke enmity).[2] Marshall suggests that Paul's initial dependency on higher status believers for hospitality would have operated within the conventions of friendship, but his later refusal of aid would have been considered a revoking of that friendship, provoking a hostile response.[3] The Corinthian factionalism may have influenced such a scenario, for Paul may have been keen to disallow any sense of favouritism among the groups. To come under the obligations of a benefactor would have been unwise, yet to refuse a gift would be to refuse a benefactor's friendship, so dishonouring him. Hence, Paul was in a sensitive and somewhat uncertain situation. Although Marshall fails to identify the exact nature of Paul's possible friendship relationships (i.e., would they have been mutually respecting of status and so simply expressions of friendship; or would they have been perceived as attempts to bind Paul as a client to a higher status patron), his monograph has brought useful insight into yet another perspective of the complexities of social relationships at Corinth.

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[1] 1987:281-316.
[2] 1987:1-68.
[3] 1987:130-164.

***Social Status* (Theissen, Meeks & Meggitt)**

The work of Gerd Theissen has been of particular influence in studies on 1 Corinthians. In his 1982 thesis, Theissen focussed his attention specifically on social data within the text and suggested ways in which this may explain both the tensions within the Christ-movement and Paul's own handling of them. He maintained that the sociological implications observed in 1 Corinthians were inescapable (esp. 1 Cor 1:26), and demonstrated that the community was marked by social stratification, containing a minority from the upper classes and a majority of low status. Theissen drew together what could be discerned of this influential minority,[1] those who were the wise, powerful, and well-born elite, and who were undoubtedly the most influential members. He suggested that this was probably a major factor in the factionalism and tension afflicting the community. In this way, Theissen rejected the tendency of theological reductionism in previous studies, and looked instead to what he saw as the social realities in and behind the text in an attempt to explicate a whole range of complex social interactions within the community.

Wayne Meeks (1983) partly elaborated upon Theissen's thesis, maintaining that the Corinthian Christ-movement reflected a fair cross-section of urban society albeit lacking both the extreme top and bottom of the social scale.[2] He rejected Theissen's assumption that high status necessarily entailed high social integration and maintained that the transition into a marginal religious movement must have led to a degree of what he calls status inconsistency or status dissonance.[3] It was this potential ambiguity of social status, according to Meeks, which was a factor in much of the social tensions evident within 1 Corinthians.

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[1] 1982:69-119.
[2] 1983:73.
[3] 1983:22-23; 72-73, 191.

The agreement by Theissen, Meeks, and others, that the early Pauline communities contained members from diverse social levels, including some from the upper strata, was coined the 'New Consensus,' and was almost entirely unchallenged for nearly two decades. However, in 1998 a powerful new thesis did emerge in an important monograph by Justin Meggitt. Meggitt's argument was that the early urban Christ-movement should be located amongst the very poor of Greco-Roman society, whose lives were characterized by a harsh struggle for subsistence in a context of absolute poverty and deprivation.[1] He also suggested that Christ-followers developed particular survival strategies, notably that of economic 'mutualism' (a strategy seen particularly in Paul's attempt to organize a financial collection for the poor in Jerusalem).[2] Meggitt is keen to deny any socio-economic significance to the text of 1 Corinthians, including key verses such as 1:26; 4:10, 18,[3] but at the same time he, somewhat confusingly, does not wish to deny the significance of social distinctions among the non-elite.[4] Meggitt's work has brought a new dimension to the whole debate on social stratification within the Corinthian Christ-movement and has usefully precipitated a considerable amount of vigorous debate and rethinking.[5]

Analyzing 1 Corinthians through the lens of honour and shame will necessarily impinge upon some of the models and scenarios mentioned above, and these will be seen to have had some influence upon a number of aspects of this dissertation. As noted above, these will be engaged with at various points throughout what follows. Each of the works reviewed has brought new and varied insight into the study of 1 Corinthians, but each has

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[1] 1998:73, 75, 153.
[2] 1998:157-159.
[3] 1998:105-107.
[4] 1998:5; 99, n.118; 153-154, n. 417.
[5] See the critique of aspects of Meggitt's thesis in de Vos 1999:197-201; and see the recent debate between Meggitt (2001), Theissen (2001, 2003) and D. B. Martin (2001).

been able to engage with only *limited* aspects of the letter as a whole. The contributions of Litfin and Pogoloff, for example, have highlighted an important aspect to the social dimensions of the conflict in Corinth but have done so predominantly with relevance to only 1 Corinthians 1-4,[1] and, for Pogoloff, with only one particular linguistic sense of σοφία.[2] Likewise, the insightful work of both Chow on patronage and social structures allows him to explicate well the social context of particular sections of 1 Corinthians, but not others.[3] In the same way, Peter Marshall works mainly with 1 Cor 9; Fiorenza and Wire with 1 Cor 11:2-16; chs. 12-14; and Theissen (et. al.) predominantly with the factionalism in 1 Cor 1-4; 11:17-34; and with chs. 8-10. In each, then, the tool or model employed brings fresh insight into certain sections and themes within 1 Corinthians but each fails to explicate the letter holistically. It is argued here, however, that the multi-faceted tool of honour-shame is a thread which runs throughout Paul's correspondence, and can be usefully employed to elucidate the disparate social scenarios for the letter as a whole.

[1] See Litfin 1992:10. Pogoloff does also examine the social function(s) of meals (1992:237-272).
[2] The term is employed with several nuances in 1 Cor 1-4, only one of which is immediately identified with rhetoric.
[3] Notably, Chow works particularly with 1 Cor 5-6 (with additional minor points analysing 1 Cor 8-10; 11:17-34; chs. 15, 16). A. D. Clarke works with 1 Cor 1-6; cf. also Winter 1991 on 1 Cor 6.

1.2 Ancient Prosopography and the Apostle Paul[1]

The culture of Paul's day highly esteemed physical qualities such as beauty, stature, agility and health (see also, section C3, pp. 32-33), and such were considered the natural concomitants of the man of honour. Men were also compared and evaluated with respect to a wider set of virtues including birth, education, fertility, positions held, reputation, and general physical appearance.[2] Those lacking in such attributes or, worse, having visible and obvious physical weaknesses were ridiculed. Sickness or disability was specifically linked, in derogatory fashion, to a man's intelligence.[3] Greek and Roman writers consistently maintained that laughter had its origin in the study of the ugly or defective, a point made by Cicero when he insists, "caricatures...provoke loud laughter. As a rule they are levelled against ugliness or some physical defect and involve comparison with something unseemly."[4] Physical deformity or physical peculiarities figured prominently in invective: Leo of Byzantium was ridiculed for the weakness of his eyes;[5] Cicero for his varicose veins;[6] Timarchus for the deterioration of his physique;[7] Nicobulus for his ungainly gait and loud voice;[8] and Hiero for his offensive breath.[9] Certain mannerisms were used by opponents for derogatory characterizations or to make slanderous accusations. The gait of a certain posture, a particular style of walk, or the notion of servility are all alluded to in

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[1] See esp. Malina/Neyrey 1996; Theissen 2003:372-374.
[2] Hermog. *Prog.* Rhetores Graeci vol. 2:11-14.
[3] Cf. Plut. *Solon* 21.3; Forbes 1986. In the *Iliad*, Thersites is describes as "...the ugliest man who came beneath Ilion. He was bandy-legged and went lame of one foot, with shoulders stooped and drawn together over his chest." Although Odysseus describes him as "a fluent orator," he was hated by the Argives and the men "laughed over him happily" (*Il.* 2.11-270).
[4] Cic. *De or.* 2.66.266.
[5] Plut. *Mor* 88F, 633D; cf. 633C; Plut. *Sert.* 4.
[6] Dio Cass. 46.18.2.
[7] Aeschin. 1.26, 118, 120.
[8] Dem. 37.52-55.
[9] Plut. *Mor* 90B.

charges of effeminacy[1]—Cicero, in particular, was adept at drawing inferences from physical ailments to shame a person's character.[2] Hence, the prosopographic qualities of the man of honour in the first-century CE were quite clearly defined.

Within such a cultural framework, Paul's physical condition meant that he must have been considered akin to a man of little honour. Although he did possess a number of significant honour-based qualities,[3] he acknowledges only his dishonourable characteristics to the community at Corinth, "I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom" (1 Cor 2:3-4a). He goes on to urge the Corinthians to think of him as a servant (1 Cor 4:1), and insists that he is foolish, weak, held in disrepute, poorly clothed, beaten and homeless. He is reviled, persecuted, slandered, and has become the rubbish of the world; the dregs of all things (1 Cor 4:9-13; cf. 9:22). In later communication with them he speaks specifically of his weaknesses (2 Cor 11:29-30; 12:5, 9-10).[4]

He is also stigmatized as a person with weak bodily presence (2 Cor 10:10), and elsewhere he has to admit to bodily ailments (Gal 4:13). Such negative traits are directly associated with a person's status and honour. Peter Marshall, commenting upon Paul's use of ἀσθένεια to describe his physical ailment in Galatians 4:13, writes, "...[it] does not simply signify his physical weakness but alludes to his status also. The issue here is one of

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[1] Aesch. Pr. 1001-1005; cf. Ps-Aristotle 808a; Forbes 1986; P. Marshall 1987:ch. 2.
[2] Cic. *De or.* 26.3, 5.
[3] From a number of perspectives Paul claims a degree of both ascribed and achieved honour. In a Hebrew-Judean context, ascribed honour would include his heritage: male, Israelite, Benjaminite, Pharisee etc. (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5; 2 Cor 11:12). If Luke is correct in identifying Paul as a freeborn Roman citizen (Acts 16:37) this would also bring ascribed honour which guaranteed social and economic advantages, as well as legal rights. As an apostle he claimed achieved honour, "I worked harder than any of them" (1 Cor 15:10b). It appears, however, that many of the Corinthians see such honour-based characteristics as either nominal or irrelevant, and which do nothing to dissuade them from seeing Paul as having little to commend him. See Malina/Neyrey 1996:202-218.
[4] Luke's portrait of Paul, in a variety of contexts, and for a number of reasons, is typically more favourable, and hence presents him as a man of honour; see Lentz 1993; Malina/Neyrey 1996:203-204.

social judgment, by himself and others, on his worth and status according to popular convention."[1] In addition, many more of his humiliating experiences were shameful by socially accepted values,[2] and, such negative traits, measured against the favourable qualities of any rivals, could form the basis of a powerful invective against him. His standard of apostleship provided none of the social graces which the Corinthians valued so highly; rather, the criteria he advanced were their very antithesis. Paul's commitment to some form of manual work[3] also seems a sustained and conscious act of independence that earned him little admiration and restricted the degree to which he could profit from a measure of social protection and hospitality.[4] Certainly, manual work was the least popular option for a man in Paul's position particularly because of the elite class's low view of artisans and manual labour.[5] For some of the Corinthians it may well have been yet another example of his weakness and social shame.

This list of dishonourable character traits would have inspired little confidence in Paul's position among the status-conscious members of the Corinthian Christ-movement. Imprisonments and beatings by both the Judean and Roman authorities, not to mention

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[1] P. Marshall 1987:153. Indeed, it may be that Paul was continually afflicted with illness (2 Cor 4:10).

[2] He was persecuted (1 Cor 4:12; 2 Cor 4:9; Acts 13:50; 20:3); beaten (1 Cor 4:11); afflicted (2 Cor 4:8; 6:4; 11:27); beaten (2 Cor 6:5; 11:23-25; 12:7); imprisoned (2 Cor 11:25; Phil 1:12-14,17; Phlm; Acts 16:19-24; 22:22-26:31); in danger (2 Cor 11:26); under death threats (1 Cor 4:9; 2 Cor 11:32; Acts 9:23-25, 29; 14:5; 19:21-41; 21:31; 23:12-22; 25:3); mocked/reviled (Acts 17:32; 18:6); treated as an impostor (2 Cor 6:8); and shipwrecked (2 Cor 11:25; Acts 27:9-44). On the historical reliability of Acts at these various points, see Haenchen 1971.

[3] 1 Cor 4:12; 9:1-18; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:23, 27; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7-9; cf. Acts 18:3; 20:34-35; Theissen 2003:372-374.

[4] His refusal to accept patronage from certain Corinthians (9:3-14) is also an important issue, and the fact that it emerges again in 2 Corinthians (cf. 11:8-9; 12:13) indicates that it was some cause of tension. It is not entirely clear why Paul refused financial support. He may have wished to distinguish himself from popular philosophers who charged fees for their services or became attached to wealthy patrons. Conversely, he does highlight the immaturity of the congregation (1 Cor 3:1-3), and may have rejected any form of patronal relationship until he had greater confidence in them. See further Judge 1980; Corrigan 1986.

[5] So, Hock 1980; Judge 1980; Sumney 1993. The Corinthian letters only allude to Paul's working for wages and it appears as a shame element in a peristasis catalogue in which he contrasts his apostleship with the position of his opponents (1 Cor 4:12). He mentions that he received assistance from other Christ-fellowships but refuses offers from the Corinthians (1 Cor 9:12,15, 18).

stonings, are hardly calculated to inspire confidence in the respectability of anyone's position. And yet these events have been deliberately chosen by Paul. They are highlighted as being `for Christ's sake` (1 Cor 4:10) and are intended as examples to be imitated by the Corinthians as an expression of the dying and rising of Christ (1 Cor 4:16; 2 Cor 4:7-12). Paul understands that his very existence as an apostle is a participation in Christ, both in death and in life, in weakness and in strength. What is true of the apostle is true also of his Lord.[1] Paul's objective is to shame his opponents into recognition of their own foolishness and, by so doing, to nullify the honour-bound influences upon them by a process of re-education on the true nature of apostleship, (and, by implication, of Christ-centred praxis generally). Indeed, Paul's experience of shame is directly linked to his dying-and-rising-with-Christ motif. The death of Jesus, in rejection and humiliation, provides the intellectual and practical basis for Paul's expression of his own apostleship. Certainly, he interprets such weakness as a central component of his exemplification of the gospel in his manner of life, and he sees weakness as a way to direct his hearers to God rather than to himself. As Judge insightfully states of Paul, "He was stepping firmly down in the world."[2]

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[1] See Barbour 1979; Forbes 1986; Sumney 1993.
[2] 1980:214.

1.3 The Shame of Crucifixion[1]

The social revulsion towards crucifixion was unqualified; it was considered the most abhorrent method of execution known—it was an instrument of supreme humiliation, torture, and death. Cicero referred to it as a "most cruel and disgusting penalty,"[2] the "tree of shame."[3] Seneca spoke of the "accursed tree;"[4] and Josephus called it "the most wretched of deaths."[5] Crucifixion was a prerequisite in the final and total humiliation and degradation of an enemy.[6] It was regarded, too, by the Romans as the *servile supplicium*, the slave's death.[7] The ancient texts which comment upon crucifixion say very little of the physical pain of this form of punishment but focus, instead, upon the psychological terror and utter disgrace of being *publicly* put to death in a manner associated with a slave.[8] Within the categories of honour and shame, crucifixion was an instrument of complete degradation. The stripping naked of the victim,[9] the public spectacle of slow physical torture to the point of death,[10] the bodily defecation, and the mutilation and devouring of the body by wild animals,[11] were all part of the total and absolute shame imposed upon the victim—all of which would appear to be the primary category of social revulsion. Little wonder that Artemidorus in the mid/late

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[1] See *OCD* 411; Crook 1967:273; Garnsey 1970; Hengel 1977:33-38; Brandenburger 1986:392; MacMullen 1990:204-217; O'Collins 1992; R. E. Brown 1994:947; Hanson/Oakman 1998; Plautus *Poen.* 347; *Capt.* 469; *Cas.* 611; *Men.* 66, 859; *Pers.* 352; *Rud.* 518; *Trin.* 598; Ps-Quint. *Declamations* 274; Cic. *Clu.* 187; Suet. *Dom.* 10; 11.1. *Calig.* 12.2; Livy *Hist.* 22.33.2; 33.36.3; Tac. *Hist.* 2.72.2; 4.3.2; 4.11.3.

[2] *Verr.* 2.5.165.

[3] *In Defence of Rabirius* 4.13.

[4] *Ep.* 101.14.

[5] *War* 7.6.4. Cf. 7.6.4; also Tac. *Hist.* 2.72.1-2, 4.3.11.

[6] Polybius *Hist.* 8.21.3. Cf. Gen 40:19; 2 Sam 4:12.

[7] On Roman forms of crucifixion, Cohn 1972; Hengel 1977; Fitzmyer 1978; Zias/Sekeles 1985; Green 1992; O'Collins 1992; Rousseau/Arav 1995; Hanson/Oakman 1998.

[8] MacMullen (1990:204), in referring to the peculiarities of Roman penal practice, makes the succinct point that "Among Romans, everything depended on status."

[9] In Greco-Roman thought nakedness was not considered shameful in and of itself (naked performance in the Greek iselastic games, and the nakedness associated with the Roman baths is well documented), but the shame involved in this context involves a reaction towards the total loss of power of the victim. See further, B. Williams 1993:219-223.

[10] Ps-Quint. *Declamations* 274.

[11] Rousseau/Arav 1995:75.

2nd century CE could write, "Thoughts of crucifixion seemed to have caused nightmares even for those who ran no risk of such punishment."[1]

For many, even the mention of crucifixion or the cross may well have been offensive. To mention the cross frequently, as Paul does, and to envisage it as the instrument of God's glory would perhaps have sounded monstrous and detestable. Celsus dismissed derisively the redemptive role of Christ, who had been "bound in the most ignominious fashion" and "executed in a shameful way,"[2] and Trypho challenged Justin, "Prove to us that he [the Messiah] had to be crucified and had to die such a shameful and dishonourable death, cursed by the law. We could not even consider such a thing."[3] It is difficult with an encrustation of two-thousand years of cross-centred theology to perceive the revulsion of Paul's proclamation of the cross to his first-century audience. The language was certainly offensive and preposterous and to proclaim a Messiah/Saviour in such language would perhaps be seen to invite outrage and persecution. In short, within a first-century milieu dominated by the lust for honour and status, the cross represented, for both Greco-Roman and Judean, the public degradation of an individual to the limits of cultural imagination.

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[1] *Onir.* 152.4, quoted in MacMullen 1990:207. Even later, Justinian (*c.*482 CE) would speak of it as the most aggravated form of the death penalty, *Digest* 48.19.28.
[2] Origen *C. Cels* 6.10.
[3] *Dial.* 90.1. Cf. 32.1; 89.2.

1.4 The Corinthian Christ-movement: Size and Social Gatherings

There has been much scholarly endeavour both to estimate the numerical size of the Christ-movement in Corinth and to suggest an appropriate venue or venues in which the community may have met together (especially where they may have congregated to hold larger fellowship meals and the Lord's Supper). Such issues will be addressed here and the conclusions drawn will be of relevance throughout various sections of the dissertation, particularly in Chapter 4.

Many scholars simply *assume* that the gathering together of the whole community (1 Cor 11:17, 18, 20, 33) took place in the home of a wealthy Corinthian believer and then proceed to estimate the numbers involved from the dimensions of excavated ruins.[1] (Typically, villas of this period and locale may have been able to accommodate up to around fifty people.[2]) Such commentators then envisage the factionalism observed in 1 Corinthians, particularly that evidenced in 11:17-34, to be a direct consequence of the host distinguishing between his guests, and, for example, seating his higher-status friends within the dining-room (the *triclinium*), while the remainder of the congregation were left to fight for space in the *atrium*. But these assumptions are problematic on two grounds. Firstly, detailed plans of archaeological excavations show that the *triclinium* and the *atrium* are not necessarily adjacent rooms of a typical villa (or if they are, they are not necessarily open to each other);[3] and secondly, and more importantly, can one envisage Paul allowing such a blatant division along the lines of status and wealth to take place when the community came together to

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[1] So, Murphy-O'Connor 1983:153-161; Fee 1987:533-534; Pogoloff 1992:239-241; Dunn 1995:18; D. B. Martin 1995:74; Witherington 1995:192-195, 241ff.; Thiselton 2000:860-861; Theissen 2001:83.

[2] Hence, the numbers assumed to be in the community are of this order. Murphy-O'Connor (1983:157-158) and Thiselton (2000:861) suggest around 50; Dunn, "no more than about three or four dozen" (1995:18); Witherington, "at least 40" (1995:32).

[3] See Wiseman 1979:528; Murphy-O'Connor 1983:155-159; Wallace-Hadrill 1994:53, 56; Shelton 1998:60, 75.

celebrate the Lord's Supper? The answer to the last question, especially in light of Paul's conceptual understanding of the Christ-movement as a unified body (12:12-31), must be, no. The social dimensions at work here are obviously more complex.

The book of Acts suggests three things of the nascent community in Corinth. Firstly, the initial believers (both Judean and Greco-Roman), once separated from the synagogue, met in the house of Titius Justus (Acts 18:7).[1] We also observe from Acts that πολλοὶ τῶν Κορινθίων ἀκούοντες ἐπίστευον καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο (Acts 18:8). Thirdly, Luke claims that Paul received a vision from the Lord for a specific commission to evangelise the city of Corinth (Acts 18:9-11).[2] If one accepts the historicity of Acts at this point, one could therefore surmise that Paul's long tenure in the city was to fulfill this specific commission, and that his departure pointed to the fact that he believed it had now been accomplished. The πολλοί were now part of the community of believers.

But what of actual statistics?[3] Theissen provides us with a summary of those Corinthians known to us by name as well as an estimate of their social stratification—this comprises some sixteen individuals plus one group (Chloe's people, 1 Cor 1:11).[4] In most cases the "households" of those mentioned, i.e., the majority of dependants would have become part of the community too. Witherington maintains that there are fourteen named men having an association with Corinth who presumably had wives, children, and slaves, and so in total this would equate to a group of around forty.[5] As there may have been other members of what may be termed the "pro-Paul" group who are not mentioned, this group

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[1] The home was the typical meeting place for the early Christ-movement, Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Acts 20:7-8; Banks 1994:31ff. The idiom of τῇ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ occurs four times in the NT (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:5; Col 4:15; Phm 2), denoting a gathering in a private house.
[2] See Haenchen 1971:535-536.
[3] See the recent statistical analysis of the composition of the Christ-movement at Philippi, Oakes 2001:59-76.
[4] 1982:94-95, and see further pp. 69-119.
[5] Witherington 1995:32, 243, n. 9.

could therefore have been in the order of about fifty people (or more). Those mentioned by name must have had a close affiliation to Paul and were likely to have been converted during his time in the city—as such they could be considered to be supportive of the apostle and to form the basis (or to be the *sole* basis) of the "pro-Paul" group. It is important to note that during the period of Paul's stay in Corinth a group of this size would have been able to meet in a single home for fellowship, worship, teaching and the sharing of the Lord's Supper, and, presumably, they became cognizant of at least the basic elements of Pauline thought and "theology."

If Paul left the city in September of 52 CE[1] and did not write 1 Corinthians until the spring of either 54 or 55 CE,[2] then the community in the city had a further eighteen-months to two-and-a-half-years to grow in numbers. By this time there were likely to have been many other converts, none of whom had any first-hand association or knowledge of Paul and who appear to have formed themselves into disparate groups with allegiances elsewhere. Consequently, the total numbers in the community may now have numbered well over a hundred (Hays projects a number between 150-200[3]). Certainly, membership of the many voluntary associations in the Empire typically numbered around one-hundred, and this may

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[1] So, Hemer 1980:8; Murphy-O'Connor 1997:184; Thiselton 2000:30-31. This depends upon the dating of Gallio's term of office in Corinth, see Murphy-O'Connor 1983:141-152; Thiselton 2000:29-32.

[2] Scholarly dating of 1 Corinthians is as follows: Bruce, spring 55 (1971:24); Barrett, end of 53-spring 54 (1971:5); Kümmel, spring 54/55 (1975:279); Fee, spring 53/54/55 (1987:15); Schrage, spring 54/55 (1991:36); Witherington, spring 53/54 (1995:73); Thiselton, spring 54/55 (2000:32). If Paul left Corinth around Sept 52, then a date of spring 53 CE for 1 Corinthians is too early—the dates of either spring 54/55 are more reasonable.

[3] Although Hays claims that this may be "on the high side" (1997:7), he does not appear to realize that even taking his qualification into account, such numbers conflict with his view that the church met together in a (single) home (1997:196). Interestingly, in a statistical analysis of the growth of the early Christ-movement, sociologist Rodney Stark argues that by 50 CE the total number of Christ-followers as a percentage of the population of the Roman empire was 0.0023. Applying this figure to Corinth, with a population of approximately 80,000, yields a figure of 184 believers; within the range suggested by Hays (Stark 1996:7; and see more generally pp. 3-27). I mention Stark's figures simply for interest and comparison; his statistical analysis is obviously very generalized and one would not want to base too much on them without relevant data from elsewhere. More recently, Lindemann suggests a membership of about 100 (2000:13).

explain why the Christ-movement was likened to groups of this kind.[1] On the reading here, the letter of 1 Corinthians may well have been written to a community of around 150 members, made up of three or four house-groups meeting in different homes (a scenario which may have been a contributory factor in the rise of the factional allegiances outlined in 1:12[2]). A believing community of this size is also more than reasonable in relation to the variety of different factions and internal conflicts which appear to have beset the community, and particularly in light of the fact that the "pro-Paul" group appears unable to exert any stabilizing influence upon the community, nor to exert any kind of authority vis-à-vis Pauline teaching and values.[3] Neither is the "pro-Paul" group even influential in drawing up the form and detail of the letter sent to Paul from the community itself, for reports of various concerns from this group appear to have been passed on either via Chloe's people or the Stephanas delegation (1 Cor 1:11; 16:17; cf. 5:1; 11:18).

Once the initial group expanded from one house-group into two (or more) a decision had to be made, in Paul's absence, concerning a suitable meeting place for the whole community. Paul had given no instructions relevant to fellowship meals and the Lord's Supper in anything other than a home (where the host probably provided all of the food). As the Christ-movement shared features with voluntary associations, this may suggest that gatherings of the whole community could well have taken place in a typical *collegia*-style "club-room,"[4] perhaps rented by some of the wealthier members. Other options would

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[1] Superficially, there were significant similarities between the Christ-movement and these institutions, as noted in various sources, Pliny *Ep.* 10.96; Origen *C. Cels.* 1.1, 8.17.47; Tert. *Apol.* 38-39. See also Wilken 1972, 1984:31-47; Banks 1994:34; Kloppenborg 1996:16-30, esp. 25-26.

[2] So, S. C. Barton 1986:238; Thiselton 2000:857.

[3] While Witherington sees that divisions in the community may have arisen through the household cells and that a meeting of the whole congregation was exceptional (1995:30), his suggestion that numbers were quite small ("at least 40," 1995:32) makes little sense if a typical villa could accommodate up to fifty people (1995:6). His initial argument, correct in my view, would require much larger numbers.

[4] *OCD* 352. Witherington notes that it was typical for *collegia* to meet in temples or in their own club-rooms (1995:242, n. 6), but does not pursue the idea with respect to the Corinthian congregation.

include the possibility of meeting in a basilica, the large multi-purpose public halls which served as a social or commercial meeting place[1] (in Corinth, three Roman basilicas have been excavated, one from the first century and one from the period of Augustus[2]). Certainly, Paul's use of the participle συνερχομένος in 1 Cor 11:18, 20, 33 (*when* you come together) points to the gathering of the whole community to be less common than the house-group meeting. Further, the reference to Gaius as ξένος to Paul and the Christ-movement (Rom 16:23) need not mean that he is simply providing Paul with accommodation or that the whole community came together in his home, it may be that he is the "one who extends hospitality" elsewhere (cf. BAGD 548), or it may simply be a polite term for "patron," given the corporate purview of the text.[3] The social setting of a club-room makes best sense of the ability of an "outsider" or an "unbeliever" to simply enter into a meeting of the whole congregation (1 Cor 14:23); something most unlikely to happen if a meeting was held in the home of a wealthy believer.[4] It also makes more sense of 11:22, "Do you not have homes to eat in?" which would be nonsensical for those who were currently eating *in their own home* (cf. also 11:34). Certainly, the use of a secular building for a congregational meeting may not be unprecedented within the NT period, for Luke notes that while in Ephesus, Paul made daily use of the lecture hall of Tyrannus to preach the word of the Lord (Acts 19:10).[5]

In summary, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to a congregation probably meeting regularly in three or four house-groups and, analogous with voluntary and cult associations, the whole

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[1] *OCD* 235.
[2] *Ancient Corinth,* American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1954, pp. 21, 45f. It is interesting to note that later buildings erected in the time of Constantine for Christ-followers were given the name "basilica." See further Davies 1968; McLean 1996:186-225, here 215-218.
[3] Cf. LSJ ξένος, 1. guest-friend, applied to persons and states bound by a treaty or a tie of hospitality.
[4] See Wallace-Hadrill 1994:10, 38ff.; Meggitt 2001:93.
[5] See Haenchen 1971:559-560.

congregation came together less regularly (perhaps monthly[1]) in a larger venue, to partake of a fellowship meal and the Lord's Supper.[2] The social context of 1 Cor 11:17-34; 12-14 is therefore to be found within such a venue and not the home of a wealthy member of the congregation.[3] That said, the basic structure of the communal meal or banquet in the ancient world was widely followed in a variety of settings and cultural contexts (whether it was a private meal, philosophical banquet, club banquet, or religious meal),[4] and, consequently, attitudes to the pursuit of honour on occasions of dining were likely to have been quite similar irrespective of location (this will be examined below).

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[1] So, *OCD* 352; Banks 1994:34.

[2] Blue 1991:228, n. 25; cf. Smith 1981:323. Contra Hofius (1993:92, n. 94) and Horrell (1996:87) who suggest that the community ate the Lord's Supper weekly. On the Christ-movement at Rome see (cautiously) Caragounis 1998 and also Adams 2000:196-198.

[3] So contra those who claim that the whole community met together to eat the Lord's Supper in a private home: Fee 1987:568; Blue 1991:224-225; Pogoloff 1992:239; Dunn 1995:75, 77; Hays 1997:193; Thiselton 2000:856.

[4] So, Balsdon 1969:19-54; Smith 1981. In general on Greco-Roman dining see Murray 1990; P. Lampe 1994; on the many types of voluntary associations, Kloppenborg/Wilson 1996; on clubs, and the distinction of professional and religious clubs, Theissen 2001:76-78.

Chapter 2

HONOUR AND PARTISANSHIP: 1 CORINTHIANS 1-4

2.1 Introduction

In 1 Corinthians, the literary integrity of which is assumed in this thesis,[1] Paul's primary concern was to censure and bring to an end the community's reported quarrelling and factionalism and to see it replaced with a profound sense of congregational unity.[2] But there were other significant issues to be resolved, chiefly the vexed question of how the Christ-movement could most adequately establish a sense of self-identity within its local Greco-Roman milieu. Paul recognized that the fledgling group was in need of firm guidance in order to find a way to function coherently as a counter-cultural community for, as was already apparent, its lack of self-definition and clear community boundaries was the cause of

[1] The unity of the letter has been in question since 1910 when J. Weiss published his commentary on 1 Corinthians, and the last forty years in particular have seen a proliferation of partition theories which divide the canonical letter into various sections or letter fragments (often in concert with theories on 2 Corinthians). The work of Schmithals (1971, 1973) has been particularly influential. For recent analysis of partition theories (with bibliographies) see Hurd 1965; Merklein 1984; Sellin 1987; Betz/Mitchell 1992. Despite such theories I regard arguments for the letter's integrity more compelling, and this is especially so since M. M. Mitchell's 1991 thesis. Because my concern is with matters of a socio-theological nature rather than with the formal rhetorical structure of the letter, I will not set forth Mitchell's structural analysis in detail, but my working assumption is that the letter should be read as a unified whole. Those that hold to the unity of the letter include, Robertson/Plummer 1925, Grosheide 1953, Hurd 1965, Barrett 1971, Bruce 1971, Conzelmann 1975, Fascher 1975, Wolff 1975, Fee 1987, 1999, M. M. Mitchell 1991, Chow 1992, Dunn 1995, Witherington 1995, Hays 1997, and Thiselton 2000.

[2] That there is some form of internal division in the church is evident from three texts, 1:10-12; 3:4-5; and 11:18-19. On the import of unity within the congregation, see B. Sanders 1981:361; Meeks 1983:108ff, 113, 123, 166-167, 191; MacDonald 1988:51-53; M. M. Mitchell 1991:75-76; and Chow 1992:179-186. Unity was a powerful and constant concern for the leaders of Diaspora synagogues (Meeks 1983:191), and the urging *against* factionalism and *for* unity is often seen in the early Church Fathers (e.g. *1 Clem.* 47:1-3, the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, the Muratorian Canon; see further M. M. Mitchell 1991:17-18). Filson (1939) and Klauck (1981) claim that, historically, the church at Corinth may actually never have been a unity. But even if such a (hypothetical) reconstruction is correct, Paul is describing in the letter a "congregational unity" as the social *norm* from which the they are deviating (regardless of whether such unity actually existed in the past).

numerous problems.[1] In addition, there was also the delicate predicament of the community's relationship to Paul himself, for the partisanship was undermining his apostolic credibility, with some of the Corinthians now openly rejecting his authority.

In relation to the question of Paul's apostolic status relative to the community, his position of authority was dependent upon the recognition of his charismatic power which gave him honour and so status.[2] But at the same time his authority was neither unlimited, nor universally recognized. It was limited primarily by the authority of those in Jerusalem, by personal inadequacies on his own part, and by other so-called "apostles" who came to Corinth after him. Following his departure from the province, the recognition of his authority was, it seems, increasingly undermined and was certainly rejected by those who were in competition with him. Hence, the social context of Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians was focussed upon his honour standing within the community which, as is clear from both 1 and 2 Corinthians, was under threat and which (in both letters) he was attempting to re-assert.[3]

In general terms, the relation of honour to the issue of internal strife within a community has been observed at numerous points in section C of the Introduction.[4] The main feature of community social structure is the solidarity of the family and the categorical

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[1] On community boundaries see M. M. Mitchell 1991:116; esp. Barclay 1992, 1995; A. C. Mitchell 1993:585; D. B. Martin 1995:163-179; Esler 1997:128-134; 2003:40-76; J. T. Sanders 1997; Adams 2000:85-103. Barclay (1995:124) considers that a "fundamental point of dispute" between the apostle and the Corinthians is the location of their community boundaries and that Paul sees their social integration "far too comfortable." The relevance of honour-shame in this context will be seen below.

[2] Cf. the useful analysis of charismatic authority in the now standard works of Gerth/Mills 1970 and Miyahara 1983 (the latter used by Malina 1996:123-130).

[3] Unfortunately for Paul, the damage done to his credibility as an apostle (i.e. his honour status) led to the increased resistance evident in 2 Corinthians. Here, some were undermining his apostleship to the extent of demanding "proof" that Christ spoke through him (2 Cor 13:3, δοκιμή, having an honour-based quality dependent upon one's character "being approved," BAGD *sv*), and even questioning whether he was "genuine" (2 Cor 13:7, δόκιμος). Paul's vociferous reply in defence of his honour attempted to place a question-mark over the putative faith of his critics (2 Cor 13:5), and included a furious denunciation of his opponents whom he castigated as "false apostles" (2 Cor 11:13). Cf. Engberg-Pedersen 1987.

[4] For the role and function of honour-shame within Paul's letter to the Roman community, albeit with different emphases, see Moxnes 1988, 1988a.

nature of obligations between its members.[1] Whatever is done or suffered by one member equally affects the honour and shame of the others. No-one is able to stand in isolation without reference to his/her membership in a family or group, and one carries always a weight of representative responsibility when one's actions are observed or even speculated upon by others. In Paul's view, to become a member of the believing community meant radical social change—it entailed entry into an association that now constituted itself as a *new* family, replacing other relationships and sources of identity; it meant the possibility of experiencing hostility from outsiders; and it meant the renouncing of any involvement in other cults and rituals.[2] Any internal quarrelling could only bring dishonour to the community and undermine the effective witness and propagation of the gospel. In short, Paul's problem was that many, perhaps most, of the Corinthian Christ-followers were not yet fully socialized into his concept of ἐκκλησία.

Paul countered such problems by insisting (or reminding) the community that the central paradigm for new community thought and action was now the cross of Christ and that this stood as a necessary corrective to any alternative ideas of Christ-centred praxis. The importance of the cross for Paul can hardly be overstated—the crucified messiah remained for him the very centre of his life, for it stood as the ultimate expression of the power and wisdom of God.[3] But here stood the essential dilemma. In a culture striving for honour, the message of the death of Jesus of Nazareth upon a cross was its obverse: one of extreme shame. It was aesthetically and ethically repulsive; an offence to ancient ears (see further, section 1.3 above).[4] Indeed, this new doctrine of salvation stood in sharp contrast to Greco-

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[1] Malina 1993:63-89; 117-148.
[2] On the centrality of the household, see Meeks 1983:77ff. J. K. Campbell (1964) has adequately detailed a contemporary application of such a view in modern Greece.
[3] For a recent critical review of scholarship on Paul's theology of the cross, see Pickett 1997:9-24.
[4] This offence can still be clearly traced in the later polemic of writers like Celsus (Origen *C. Cels* 2.33-37).

Roman philosophical ideals of the divine nature of the gods,[1] and appeared to Paul's contemporaries as an irrational or even a mad superstition.[2] For this was not the glorious death of a hero from Homeric or Hellenistic times, but that of a recent Judean craftsman, crucified as a criminal by the Roman authorities. The fact that Paul repeatedly draws upon the symbolism of the cross betrays a suspicion that many honour-based Greco-Roman values continued to have a stronghold within the Corinthian congregation and that these formed part of a symbolic system which was dialectically opposed to the ideals and values inferred from the "word of the cross" (1 Cor 1:18).[3] In short, Paul's *theologia crucis* stood as a sharp polemic arising from the need to counter opposing socio-theological ideologies, central of which was the issue of honour.[4]

The remainder of this chapter will focus more thoroughly upon 1 Corinthians 1-4, for here, Paul lays much of the groundwork for what follows in the rest of the letter (which will analysed in the two following chapters). Many of the above issues will be explicated more fully in what follows, and will be done so with particular interest to issues of honour-shame.

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[1] E. Ferguson 1993:155-159.
[2] E. Ferguson 1993:556-572.
[3] See Geertz 1973:89 on social symbols.
[4] Although critical scholarship on 1 Corinthians observes that Paul's *theologia crucis* dominates his thinking in the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, the extent to which Paul employs the cross as the quintessential paradigm for Christ-centred praxis *throughout* the letter is less appreciated. This theme, however, runs as a significant thread throughout the correspondence and will be unfolded below.

2.2 Strife in Corinth

One of the most widely discussed features of 1 Corinthians is the congregational "factionalism" outlined in 1 Cor 1:10ff.[1] Much scholarly discussion has focused upon questions of a theological nature, and many have sought to locate the source of the divisions in conflicting theological ideologies or agendas. But there are numerous problems inherent in such an enterprise and the attempt to discern the doctrinal differences among the disparate groups has not only been somewhat fruitless but is now largely abandoned.[2] More recently, many are now analysing the context of the letter with a view to articulating the factionalism within the letter from a variety of first-century *social* perspectives.[3]

That the conflict may have a wider social dimension with the intense rivalry perhaps involving a cross-section of people from different socio-economic and/or cultural backgrounds has been demonstrated adequately by Theissen (1982), Meeks (1983) and others. But to view the quarrelling, partisanship, and many of the other internal problems within the community, from a perspective of the rapacious pursuit of honour evident in Greco-Roman culture has not yet been considered, but is entirely reasonable. For the pursuit

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[1] Whilst many note the presence of numerous parties within the congregation, the details of some (esp. the parties of "Christ" and "Peter") are difficult to ascertain. This led Munck in 1954 (ET 1959:167) to argue that there were no `parties,' as such, there at all. But the way in which Paul responds to the Corinthians has convinced most scholars that Munck has probably overstated his case and that there does appear to be some kind of division. For a helpful discussion of the problem of parties in Corinth see Hurd 1965:96-107; Conzelmann 1975:34; and Fee 1987:47. In 1831, Baur argued that there were essentially two distinct, and opposing groups at Corinth, a group representing Pauline Christianity (focussed on Paul and Apollos), and a group representing Petrine Jewish Christianity (focussed on Peter and Christ). In a nuanced way this has been followed by Goulder (1991). More recently, Litfin (1994:184; following Dahl 1967) claims that there were only two parties in Corinth, those who aligned themselves with Paul and those against him. Munck's thesis (1959:143), that Paul's only opponents at Corinth were followers of Apollos striving after wisdom, has been taken up by some who consider Apollos to have been the source of a Philonic type of Hellenistic Judaism wherein wisdom played a central role (Horsley 1976, 1977; Sellin 1987:3015; Hyldahl 1991:20-23). See also the works of Hurd (1965), Schmithals (1971, 1973), and Schotroff (1985). On all of these works, the critiques of Fee 1987:13-14; Barclay 1992:64-65; and Horrell 1996:112-113 are useful. The problems of reconstructing a Corinthian `theology' are laid out in Schrage (1991:39-47) who also provides a careful discussion concerning what can and cannot be known about the Corinthian Christ-movement in general.

[2] Schrage (1991:38-63), for example, has catalogued at least thirteen different theories about the character of "the Corinthian theology." See also Hurd 1965.

[3] See, for example, P. Marshall 1987:ix.

of honour is likely to have been an attitude prevalent not simply amongst the higher-status members of the congregation, but amongst most of the Christ-followers within the community.[1] Hence, it need not be assumed that the various problems at Corinth stemmed from only one or two particular groups but, rather, that they involved many in the congregation, and that these related to a lust for honour which was perhaps manifesting itself in different ways.[2] Certainly, Paul's letter is addressed to the congregation as a whole with no suggestion that he is speaking to one particular group at any specific point.[3]

As noted above, 1 Corinthians is throughout an argument for ecclesial unity. This is evidenced in the first major section of the letter (1:10-4:21) where Paul's appeal for unity in 1:10 is paralleled with that in 4:16, and which forms an inclusio around these significant chapters. He indicates that the source of the internal problems within the community is 'dissensions' or 'quarrelling *among you*' (vv. 10, 11; not at this point between Paul and any of the Corinthians), which has led to divisions (σχίσματα, "cracks, dissensions"). He returns to the same idea at 3:3 when he speaks of 'jealousy and strife *among you.*' As is well documented, both verses are filled with terms which have a long history in speeches, political treatises and historical works dealing with political unity and factionalism, which are often, as here, intertwined with social issues and motivations.[4] In Hellenistic Greek,

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[1] See above, p. 31 and n. 2.

[2] In this respect I disagree with Fee (1987, following Hurd 1965:96, and to a certain extent Munck 1959) who maintains that the historical situation in Corinth was one of conflict primarily between the community as a whole in opposition to Paul (1987:8). Many of the texts quoted by Fee in defence of such an argument are somewhat ambiguous (1 Cor 1:12; 4:3, 6; 10:29-30; 14:37), and while his remaining texts (1:18-20; 9:3; 15:12) do speak of some form of antagonism towards Paul, it is unclear how many in the congregation are representative of such sentiments or, indeed, whether Paul has in mind the same people. The situation may be more complex than Fee allows.

[3] The majority of the letter is in the second person plural, except for a few instances where he shifts to the second person singular, perhaps with some specific person(s) in view (1 Cor 4:7; 7:21, 27; 8:9-10; 14:16-17; 15:36-37).

[4] So Welborn 1987; M. M. Mitchell 1991. There is also the relevance of *enmity* in a Roman context, on which see esp. Epstein 1987. Epstein notes that the widespread phenomenon of *inimicitiae* was "the driving force in a Roman's conduct," greatly influencing his public behaviour (p. 2, cf. pp. 12, 79), and that, "The prestige

σχίσμα was used metaphorically of political division[1] or of civil strife within a community.[2] It is also found in Clement's first epistle when he speaks of the "detestable and unholy *schism*" within the Corinthian Christ-movement of his own day.[3] Utilizing the language of Paul in 1 Corinthians, Clement asks, "Why are there quarrels and anger and dissension and divisions (σχίσματα) and war among you?"[4] It appears, within the wider context, that Clement has in mind not so much a religious heresy or a harmless clique, but factions engaged in a struggle for honour through power and status (see further below).[5] A parallel is found in 1 Cor 11:18-19, where Paul speaks of the divisions (σχίσματα) and factions (αἵρεσις) within the community. In an analysis of αἵρεσις by Marcel Simon, he concludes, "...in the oldest Christian writings the term *hairesis* does not necessarily have the sense of doctrinal deviation...The cause of these divisions is not necessarily to be found in points of doctrine: it may be simply a matter of personal rivalries and matters of prestige and honor."[6]

Interestingly, many of the terms and *topoi* employed here are paralleled in a prayer of Dio Chrysostom who invokes the gods on behalf of his city,

> That from this day forth they may implant in this city a yearning for itself, a passionate love, a singleness of purpose, a unity of wish and thought; and, on the other hand, that they may cast out strife [στάσις] and contentiousness [ἔρις] and jealousy, so that this city may be

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gained by the pursuit of *inimicitiae* explains the positive relish the Romans took in doing their enemies ill...One man's satisfaction was another's humiliation" (pp. 21-22, 24). The relevance of *inimiticiae* within an honour-shame context is obvious. Epstein concludes, "At their worst, *inimicitiae* attacked what a Roman guarded most, his honour, his property and his civic rights. An attack on an enemy's honour was perhaps the most characteristic feature of *inimicitiae*..." (p. 76). On *inimicitiae* see Cass. Dio 37.39.3; 38.29.4; 48.29.3

[1] Herodotus 7.129.

[2] Diod. Sic. 12.66.2.

[3] *1 Clem.* 1.1.

[4] *1 Clem.* 46.5.

[5] *1 Clem.* 47.

[6] Simon 1979:109. On quarrelling leading to factions, see Polyb. 8.21.9.

> numbered among the *most prosperous* and the *noblest* for all time to come. (*Or.* 39.8; italics mine)[1]

Dio's urging to unity and the rejection of strife and jealousy has but one aim, to see the community prosper and to see it honoured.[2] He is not urging concord as a value in itself, but sees it in relation to a wider social context, fundamental of which is the honour of the community seen through its wealth and splendour. Paul's urging of unity upon the Corinthian congregation may be seen in a similar way, for within the wider social milieu, the factionalism and power struggles can only be seen negatively by outsiders, bringing shame upon the community and the gospel. The proclamation of a crucified saviour was difficult enough without the unnecessary encumbrance of the Christ-movement being seen as a place of ridicule and dishonour.

The realm of politics is also evidenced in the slogans of 1:12-13, "each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" These clearly reflect the principles at work in the establishment of ancient political parties. Throughout antiquity one way of experiencing honour in a group was to identify oneself with a figure regarded by the group as powerful. Indeed, ancient political parties were formed according to personal allegiances rather than specific policies.[3] Personal loyalty to a man of higher status and honour became the basic relationship from which party identification developed, and the personal enmity between such men became the social reality behind the concept of factionalism. Parties were named after the *individuals* whose

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[1] Cf. Boissevain (1974) for a similar contemporary picture of the strife existing between parishes on Malta.
[2] On strife linked to the pursuit of glory within a civic community see Sall. *Iug* 61.2.
[3] See Welborn 1987:89-92; Chow 1992:7, 97; A. D. Clarke 1993:91-94; Gill 1993a:337.

interests they served (the phrases "faction of Marius" or the "party of Pompey," are evident in antiquity and are conjoined to such expression as στάσις and μερίς).[1]

However, the most thorough-going attempt to assess the underlying reasons for party factionalism is articulated by Aristotle. Here, he is worth quoting at length,

> And since we are considering what circumstances give rise to party factions [στάσεις] and revolutions in constitutions, we must first ascertain their origins and causes generally. They are, speaking roughly, three in number, which we must first define in outline separately. For we must ascertain what state of affairs gives rise to party strife [στασιάζουσι], and for what objects it is waged, and thirdly what are the origins of political disorders and internal party struggles. Those that desire equality enter on party strife if they think that they have too little although they are the equals of those who have more, while those that desire inequality or superiority do so if they suppose that although they are unequal they have not got more but an equal amount or less (and these desires may be felt justly, and they may also be felt unjustly); for when inferior, people enter on strife in order that they may be equal, and when equal, in order that they may be greater. *The objects about which it is waged are gain and honour*, and their opposites, *for men carry on party faction in states in order to avoid dishonour* and loss, either on their own behalf or on behalf of their friends...the motives of gain and honour also stir men up against each other not in order that they may get them for themselves, as has been said before, but because they see other men in some cases justly and in other cases unjustly getting a larger share of them...*It is clear also what is the power of honour and how it can cause party faction* [στάσεως]; for men form factions both when they are themselves dishonoured and when they see others honoured; and the distribution of honours is unjust when persons are either honoured or dishonoured against their deserts, just when it is according to desert. (*Pol.* 5.2.1-4 [1302a.16-1302b.10]; italics mine)[2]

[1] App. *B Civ.* 1.1; Polyb. 8.21.9; Plut. *Sert.* 4.3-4; 7.1; *Pomp.* 65.1; Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.25. Peter Marshall (1987) notes that much of the language of 1 Corinthians 1-4 comes from arguments against ὕβρις, which has a direct association with concepts of honour-shame.

[2] For similar sentiments see also, *Pol.* 2.4.7; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.29; Sall. *Iug* 41.2; Ps-Sall *Rep.* 8.4; Philo *Decal.* 151-153.

Aristotle clearly locates the predominant underlying reason behind party factionalism to be the pursuit of honour, and he recognizes that the "power of honour," as a social prerequisite, places it *above* social concord and harmony.

While the political and civic contexts of the above examples obviously differ from that of the internal problems within the Corinthian congregation, the underlying framework of factionalism derived from the pursuit of honour demonstrates the same social reality.[1] So, while Paul is responding to the internal divisions, he is also responding to the values which lie behind them, and it is not surprising to find that the factions in Corinth centre on the four men whose reputations (and so honour-standing) within the congregation, are of the highest regard.[2] Paul was the supreme apostle to the Gentiles, commissioned by Christ himself, and whose missionary endeavours had founded numerous congregations around Asia and Greece.[3] Luke's picture of Apollos, which coheres well with what we find in 1 Corinthians (see below), describes a man of erudition, eloquent of speech,[4] one well-versed in the scriptures; and one who "spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus."[5] He was of significant help to the community in Corinth for he

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[1] See Engberg-Pederson 1987:561; Witherington 1995:101.

[2] There is no hint that the apostles were themselves personally linked to the partisanship done in their name. Indeed, Paul's affirmation of Apollos (3:5-9; 16:12) indicates the opposite.

[3] Pogoloff may be missing the point when he writes, "Those "of Paul" have perceived him as possessing the status indicator of eloquence, while those "of Apollos" perceive Apollos superior in this regard" (1992:119; cf. p. 178). So, too, de Vos (1999:219), "The opposition to Paul in 1 Cor 1-4 appears to be based on his *refusal* to preach in a rhetorical/sophistic style" (italics mine). Paul never claims that he is eloquent and specifically denies the charge at numerous points (1 Cor 1:17, 21; 2:1, 3-4). Rather, what he demonstrates is the status indicator of power (1:24; 2:4-5; 4:19-20)—that divine charismatic power which initially established the congregation as those "being saved" ("[by] the power of God," 1:18), and through which the sought-after spiritual gifts are manifested.

[4] Luke describes Apollos as ἀνὴρ λόγιος (Acts 18:24), which can mean one who is "learned" "cultured," or "skilled in words," i.e. "eloquent." (BAGD 1056). It is used by Philo to refer to a person well-trained in rhetoric (*Post.* 53, 162; *Mut.* 220; *Cher.* 116; cf. Plut. *Cic* 49.5). Cf. Haenchen 1971:549-550. Although one cannot make the assumption that every Alexandrian Judean was a potential Philo, many no doubt found Apollos a refreshing change after an apostle who could be dismissed as a 'fool' (2 Cor 11:16). And while Apollos' original teaching or intentions cannot be determined we can gauge that the Corinthian response to them was highly favourable.

[5] Acts 18:25. On Apollos generally, see Chow 1992:103-107; Pickett 1997:49ff.

"powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus."[1] Peter was the great "rock" of the Christ-movement, one of the first disciples,[2] the apostle to the Judeans (Gal 2:8), and perhaps the most significant of the pillars of the Jerusalem Christ-movement (Gal 1:18; 2:2). Jesus, naturally, was the supreme figure of the believing community, whose unique status was one of superlative honour.[3] However, his earthly status (of acute shame) was the converse, and the proclamation of a gospel which focussed upon him as the crucified one, may well have precluded some in the community from adhering to a 'Christ party.' For such people, identification with one of the other leaders may have presented a better "option."

Peter may have been a more dangerous potential cause of dissension in Corinth than either Paul or Apollos, and probably a difficult relationship existed between Paul and Peter after the conflict at Antioch. Barrett (1982:4) argues for the actual presence of Peter in Corinth at some stage, and suggests that a group adhering to his teaching "...adopted a Jewish Christian 'nomistic' attitude, not extreme enough actually to divide the church (as a demand for circumcision would have done), or to disfranchise Paul from the apostolic body, but awkward enough to raise difficulties, and to cast a certain amount of doubt on Paul's

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[1] Acts 18:28.

[2] Perhaps *the* first disciple, Mt 4:18; Mk 1:16; Lk 5:3-11; but cf. Jn 1:35-42.

[3] Of all the uncertainty with regard to the parties, the greatest surrounds that of the "Christ party." Some see it as Paul's invention intended to show the absurdity of the others (so, Hurd 1965:104; Welborn 1987:87; Pogoloff 1992:178f.; and Pickett 1997:38). However, this is done with little exegetical detail. Fee (1987:58-59) asserts that "the grammar of the passage seems to demand that there were in fact Corinthians saying such a thing," and both Barrett (1971:44-46), and Hays (1997:23) demonstrate the viability of such a party. The reasons given for rejecting the Christ-party are conjectural, but on the honour-based-reading here the presence of such a party would not appear to be unreasonable. Once the congregation began to quarrel about the honour-status of a number of "authorities" with whom they were attempting to identify, the presence of a party centred upon the figure with the supreme honour-based status would be entirely expected. This group may have been attempting to rise above the quarrelling and jealousy of the rest (those boasting in mere men) but in so doing they have fallen into their own brand of elitism which made them little better than the others. Such a claim may have been coupled with a pretension to have direct spiritual access to Christ (perhaps on the basis of Paul's own preaching, Gal 1:11-12), but for whatever reason, Paul sees that when such partisanship becomes the rallying cry of one group, then Christ is de facto reduced to the status of one more "leader" within the community.

status." Barrett concludes (1982:32): "...it seems far more probable that he had himself been in Corinth than that members of the church there had simply heard of him as a notable Palestinian Christian." The arguments of Barrett's (1982) thesis are persuasive, although for the purposes of personal identification with a figure of high status, the on-going debate over whether Peter had ever been to Corinth is somewhat immaterial.[1] The mere recognition of his high standing within the Christ-movement would be enough for men to want to be associated with such a figure, whether they had met him personally or not. The social histories of Greece and Rome (e.g., Herodotus, Livy, Plutarch) are replete with details of men of high honour, especially military commanders, being able attract soldiers who had never met them personally.[2] So, too, influential representatives of the Jerusalem apostles, not necessarily authorized by them, made their presence felt in a number of Pauline communities.[3]

In terms of the relative value of honour-as-status, Paul may have interpreted the considerable support for Apollos as diminishment of his own status. The high status and honour of Apollos appear to be evident to all, and focusses upon personal aspects which Paul appears to lack: wisdom, eloquence, strength, and power. Although Paul places himself and Apollos as comparable (they are both servants of God labouring in God's field, 3:6, 8), this does not solve Paul's problem of loss of honour which he must re-assert to regain. At the same time he must be careful, indeed subtle, with his admonitions, for in a sensitive

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[1] The arguments of Barrett (1982: ch. 2; 1971:44) that Peter may well have visited Corinth are by no means accepted by all; e.g, Horsley 1998:34; Pogoloff 1992:178f. But the fact that these (and other) scholars simply dismiss the presence of a "Cephas-party" *without* engaging with Barrett's thesis is somewhat surprising. *1 Clem.* 47.3 notes the presence of Cephas at Corinth. On the question of how much the early churches might have known about the apostles, see Jervell 1979.

[2] See Dem. 2 *Olynth.* 17-18; *Answer to Philip's Letter* 11-13; Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.21.

[3] So, Painter 1982:239.

situation open criticism of another may backfire, and Apollos was clearly held in high regard by some. Paul would not wish to antagonize them.[1]

That the party-slogans had certainly arisen spontaneously and without any direct encouragement from the leaders whose names were being used is clear from the way in which Paul's criticism is directed only towards the Corinthians themselves in rejecting *their* false estimation of the leaders. In light of Galatians, one can hardly argue that Paul would not have criticized another apostle in a public letter. But since Paul is able to address the whole congregation, such divisions should not necessarily be understood as suggesting that there were severe splits within the community. Rather, the letter indicates that these revolve around inchoate quarrels (1:11; 3:3), jealousies (3:3), and "boasting,"[2] stemming from a sense of partisanship, and that perhaps open divisions (σχίσματα) only occurred when the congregation came together as a whole (11:18; 14:33).[3] Paul's highly charged rhetoric is aimed at stopping the current partisanship from developing into overt schism and splitting the community, rather than that it was already so.

The different factions, then, appear to be more concerned with the characteristic status of the leaders they venerate, than the theologies represented by them. The underlying search for status and honour found an expression in their desire to identify with, elevate, and make claims for status on the basis of those figures of authority who demonstrated recognizable prestige and power. Welborn's proposal that the real problem of partisanship being addressed in 1 Cor 1-4 is "a struggle for power"[4] is certainly correct, although while he describes it adequately in terms of the language of ancient politics, he fails to locate its

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[1] See further, Fiore 1985:85-102; Forbes 1986:16; Neyrey 1990:96; Ker 2000.
[2] Cf. 1 Cor 1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:7; 5:6; 9:15, 16; 15:31; and below, section 2.5.5.
[3] The nuance of σχίσμα refers to cracks or fissures in a rock or tears in a garment, not to separate rocks or garments; see BAGD 797; Fee 1987:31; Witherington 1995:84, 95.
[4] 1987:87.

underlying basis in the intense rivalries for status and honour.[1] This is drawn out in Clement's first letter to the Corinthians when he reminds the community of their factionalism in Paul's day ("...you were partisans of Apostles of *high reputation*") and he castigates the current factions using the language of shame, "It is a shameful report, beloved, extremely shameful, and unworthy of your training in Christ, that on account of one or two persons the steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians is being disloyal to the presbyters...so that you bring blasphemy on the name of the Lord though your folly...".[2] Hence, parallel with the situation articulated in 1 Corinthians, the pursuit of honour through factions centred on those of power and status is actually undermining the unity of the Christ-movement and bringing dishonour and shame.

To summarize. Paul's reaction to the partisanship is to critique all of it. He is certainly very careful to avoid giving the impression that he favours any one group in Corinth, rather, he insists that he and the other apostles are united (3:22-4:1), and he particularly emphasizes the relationship between himself and Apollos as a model for the community. He also makes no identification with the 'Paul' group; indeed, he is more critical of these—his general reaction to the slogans is to begin to undermine those who use his name, or the name of the other apostles, and who attempt to set themselves apart from others (1:13; cf. 3:4-9; 4:6). Paul maintains that he is Christ's delegate and should in no sense be his rival, for what he laid at Corinth was the foundation of Christ himself. Despite the fact that Paul apparently identifies four factions in 1:12, he neither engages with their beliefs, nor does he mention or correct any theological errors.[3] Nor is it possible to

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[1] Welborn 1987.
[2] *1 Clem.* 47.4-7.
[3] Paul never accuses them of faulty theology and he praises them in 1:4-9—something he is unlikely to have done had there been such problems. See A. D. Clarke 1993:89-91; Litfin 1994:178-180; Welborn 1987:89-90. Hays assertion (1995:22) that "despite scholarly speculation it is not possible to assign a distinct theological

positively link these factions with any of the other problems or issues discussed in 1 Cor 5-14.[1] If, as argued above, the Christ-movement was a union of several house groups which met separately, such relative isolation may have allowed each group to develop its own theological slant or adhere to a particular "authority" (both of which may have allowed it to take root before being confronted by other opinions).[2] Paul's goal for the community may thus have been to solidify union among divergent house groups, rather than to prevent the congregation from breaking up into factions.[3]

2.3 Wisdom and Rhetoric

The frequent occurrence of σοφία/σοφός in 1 Cor 1-4 (twenty-seven times), which otherwise appear just ten times in the genuine Pauline corpus, is best explained by the assumption that Paul picked up on a key word of the Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor 3:18-21; 4:10).[4] To see a link between the Corinthians' notion of wisdom and the evident partisanship, quarrelling and jealousy is within reason, because the two subjects are the primary topics of chapters 1-4 (they are mentioned together for e.g. in 3:18-22). Here, Paul uses σοφία in several different senses, both positively and negatively,[5] but recent studies of 1 Corinthians

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programme to each of these factions" may in fact stem from the fact that there were no overriding theological programmes, but, rather, social ones in a determination to appropriate greater honour.

[1] So, Conzelmann 1975:34; Furnish 1990:151; M. M. Mitchell 1991:67-68; Kuck 1992:157-158; A. D. Clarke 1993:91; Litfin 1994:181; Witherington 1995:74; de Vos 1999:217f.

[2] So, Meeks 1983:76.

[3] Paul's exhortation that the whole community should submit to the leadership of Stephanus (16:16) seems to show that no generally accepted leadership existed at that time. See Murphy O'Connor 1983:158; Betz/Mitchell 1992:1141.

[4] In total, σοφία and σοφός occur 29 times in 1 Corinthians. Σοφία occurs 17 times in chs. 1-3, once in 1 Cor 12:8, once in 2 Cor 1:12, and only again at Rom 11:33 in the genuine Pauline corpus. Σοφός follows the same pattern: 9x in 1 Cor 1-3, once in 1 Cor 4:10, once in 1 Cor 6:5, twice in 2 Cor (10:12, 11:19), and 4 times in Romans. For a discussion of the various shades of meaning of σοφία/σοφός in the early chapters of 1 Corinthians see Barrett 1964:277-285; 1982:8-12; Horsley 1977:224-39; Pogoloff 1992:108-113.

[5] See Barrett 1971:49-54.

have demonstrated that throughout this section, the term "wisdom" in its wider Greco-Roman social-setting refers especially to both the possession of exalted knowledge and to the ability to express that knowledge in a powerful and rhetorically eloquent way.[1] This is especially evident at 1:17 and 2:4, where Paul first suggests that it is the notion of σοφία λόγου,[2] which is in some way connected to the internal quarrelling. Although the semantic range of both σοφία and λόγος is wide,[3] an analysis of the intersection of their semantic fields demonstrates that "σοφία λόγου," is best construed as "clever or skilled or educated or rhetorically sophisticated speech."[4] Hence, the case has been persuasively made that much of the controversy in 1 Cor 1-4 may have been stirred up by the tendency for neophyte believers to regard Paul and other preachers as rhetors competing for public attention alongside other popular philosophers.[5] What has been less appreciated, however, is the direct link between rhetoric and the lust for honour.

Greco-Roman education was almost exclusively education in rhetoric. The ancients considered rhetoric to be the most suitable preparation for life, and eloquence and erudition, together, were qualities supremely admired and much sought after.[6] Within the framework of Greco-Roman life outlined in the Introduction, the reasons for the obsessive pursuit of rhetoric are quite obvious, and should not be surprising, for its focus was upon the *public* esteem of the rhetor and which hence brought immediate and abounding honour. This is evident in a range of pagan texts. Cicero claims, "If wisdom is present as the moderator of

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[1] Most especially, M. M. Mitchell 1991; Pogoloff 1992; Litfin 1994; Witherington 1995. See Witherington 1995:58ff for further bibliography.
[2] "Cleverness in speaking," so BAGD 759.
[3] Σοφία incorporates notions of cleverness, learning, intelligence, sound judgement, speculative wisdom, natural philosophy (LSJ *sv*), while λόγος can mean word, reason, account, philosophical dialogue, speech (LSJ *sv*).
[4] So, Pogoloff 1992:110.
[5] Pogoloff 1992; Litfin 1994.
[6] See esp. Clark 1957; Marrou 1977:84ff, 194-205; Kinneavy 1987; P. Marshall 1987.

all things, then those who have attained it gain glory, honor, and prestige from it and also the most certain and safe defense of their friends."[1] Likewise, Plutarch, in the *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, has Alexidemus state simply and unequivocally, "...I observe that all you wise men too make it your aim in life to have honour shown you."[2] And Quintillian asserts of eloquence, "that there is no other source from which men have reaped such a harvest of wealth, honour, friendship and glory, both in the present and to come...Wherefore let us seek with all our hearts that true majesty of oratory...of present glory and the immortal record of posterity."[3]

Contests between poets, sophists, and rhetors involving demonstrations of such oratory and wisdom were common and highly popular, and the winners of contests of speech were accorded great honour and public prestige.[4] Philostratus could describe the popular rhetor Scopelian as the very model of the assured orator who appeared before his audiences not, "with the bearing of a timid speaker, but as befitted one who was entering the lists to *win glory* for himself and was confident that he could not fail."[5] Interestingly, in his discourse *Against Sophists*, Isocrates critiques such rhetors for those demonstrations of eloquence concerned *solely* with the appropriation of honour,

> They transmit the science of "words" as simply as they teach the letters of the alphabet, without bothering to examine the nature of each kind of knowledge, but thinking that because of the extravagance of their promises they will command *admiration* and that the teaching of discourse will be held in *high esteem*. (*Against Sophists* 10, italics mine)

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[1] *Inv. rhet.* 1.5.
[2] *Mor* 149B.
[3] 12.11.29-30. Cf. also Pliny *HN* 7.43.139-40.
[4] See Dio Chrys. *Or.* 47.22.
[5] *Lives* 5.19 (italics mine).

Contests of oratory took place not only between individuals but also between cities, and great civic honour rested upon the importance of being able to "boast" about having the greatest master(s) of eloquence. Hence, for Isocrates, "Beautiful and artistic speech... is the work of an intelligent mind... and that this has proved itself to be the surest sign of culture in every one of us, and that those that are skilled in speech are not only men of power in their own cities but are also held in honour in other states."[1] MacMullen asserts that throughout the histories of Greece and Rome, rhetoric was often a divisive factor amongst those who competed for status in the, "thirst for honor, the contest for applause."[2] And in his historical analysis of Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions, James Kinneavy notes, "The concept of rhetoric... dominated the schooling of the time in Greek and Roman education, and it was conspicuous in Jewish schools also. *It was an honorific concept*, much more complex than just a combination of intellectual and emotional appeals."[3]

Corinth would certainly have been caught up in the pattern of behaviour which elevated those who were exceptional in oratory and eloquence,[4] and perhaps some in the city strove to become students of the renowned Sophists and other rhetors.[5] Dio Chrysostom, widely acknowledged as a great orator, records that when he visited a great city of the Empire he was "escorted with much enthusiasm and respect, the recipients of my visits being grateful for my presence and begging me to address them and advise them and flocking around my door from early dawn."[6] That said, he was critical of those who made a

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[1] *Paneg.* 48-50. Cf. *Antid.* 200-204. See further Marrou 1977:79-91, esp. 84-85.
[2] 1974:62. See also Munck 1959:158, 162; Dahl 1967:321.
[3] 1987:20 (italics mine). Cf. the similar comments of P. Marshall (1987:383), "The eloquent and well educated speaker won great honours and was esteemed as a leader of society."
[4] Litfin's historical analysis of ancient rhetoric leads him to the conclusion that, "Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition with its profound emphasis upon both *logos* and *sophia* was flourishing exuberantly in Greece and, we have every reason to believe, in Corinth in particular" (1994:189). Cf. Marrou 1977:197.
[5] On such tutelage, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 55.1-5.
[6] *Or.* 47.22.

show of oratory above wisdom, and it appears that Corinth was a city especially known for such behaviour. This is observed in his description of a trip made to the city by the orator Diogenes (perhaps a veiled allusion to Dio himself[1]),

> ...the man of wisdom should take up his abode where fools are thickest in order to convict them of their folly and reprove them. So, when the time for the Isthmian games arrived, and everybody was at the Isthmus, he went down also...That was the time, too, when one could hear crowds of wretched Sophists around Poseidon's temple shouting and reviling one another, their disciples as they were called, fighting with one another, many writers reading aloud their stupid works, many poets reciting their poems while others applauded them. (*Or* 8.9)

As in all rivalry over honour, such competition could become quite divisive and a deep sense of partisanship could frequently arise. Plutarch notes that the wise man possesses the "superiority and influence so coveted" by others, and this superiority "in repute and honor" provokes jealousy in men of ambitious character.[2] A group attaching itself to a particular rhetor could be described as "*secta*" ("party, faction, sect"[3]), and loyalty to such teachers and orators could be intense, provoking violent rivalries. Indeed, Dio Chrysostom states that the definition of a disciple of such an orator or teacher was a zealot (ζηλωτής),[4] and Philostratus relates that on one occasion the pupils of a sophist became so incensed at insults being heaped on their teacher that they ordered their slaves to beat a rival orator, who subsequently died.[5] One crucial feature in displays of ancient rhetoric was the power of the audience in determining the calibre of the wisdom being delivered, and, hence, the fate of

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[1] So Murphy-O'Connor 1983:94.
[2] *Mor.* 485A-486D.
[3] Lewis/Short *sv. Secta* is the term used by Seneca the Elder (*Controv.* 10. Pr.15) in describing the followers of Apollodorus and Theodorus, rival rhetoricians in Rome in the first-century BCE.
[4] *Or.* 55.4ff.; and in general, 55.1-8.
[5] *Lives* 588.

the orator as a result.[1] Certainly, with the ascendancy of a more decorative style of rhetoric by the time of Paul, the orator became less concerned with the content of the message to be conveyed than with its poetic and creative elegance (and, naturally, with how it influenced his personal approval rating with his audience).[2] That is not to say that the early Christ-movement in Corinth operated by precisely the same rules as the public square, but it may well have been difficult for a group to relinquish the role of arbiter where this role was the standard cultural expectation.

When we turn to 1 Corinthians 1-4 it is clear that much of the above is evidenced within the Christ-movement, for in Paul's view the community is guilty of having an element of misplaced pride over certain leaders which is resulting in divisive "boasting."[3] Their behaviour, involving rivalry, jealousy and strife, appears to him to be typical of the wider social milieu—incontrovertible evidence that the Corinthians are acting in a 'human,' fleshly way (1 Cor 3:3-4). Paul claims that for him to have preached the gospel ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου (i.e., in a manner of rhetorical sophistication) would have actually emptied or made void the cross of Christ (cf. 2:4-5).[4] But in what sense would this occur? The issue, as demonstrated above, and as seen in 1 Cor 2:4-5, appears to centre upon the *form*, not the content, of his preaching. That is, the proclamation of the gospel ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου must be avoided lest it engender an inappropriate response in the audience (2:5); for the listener may respond to σοφία ἀνθρώπων (2:5) rather than to the true object of response—the cross of Christ, which is the δύναμις θεοῦ (1:18, 24; 2:5). Paul's preaching did not lack persuasion, what it lacked was the kind of articulation found among the sophists and rhetoricians where

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[1] See Plato *Ap.* 23B.
[2] See Malina 1993:34-39
[3] See 1 Cor 1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:6f, 18f; 5:2, 6; 8:1; and section 2.4.5 below.
[4] On the Greek parallels between 1:17, 2:4 (and 2:13), see Pogoloff 1992:141.

the power lay in "presence" of the orator and his delivery.[1] Paul categorically undermines and rejects the power of this style of Greco-Roman rhetoric for he sees a radically different dynamic at work. It is precisely *because* of his lack of eloquence in his proclamation of the gospel of Christ crucified that its acceptance most fully demonstrates God's power at work (1:18, 24; cf. Rom 1:16), and Paul seems to conceive of these as mutually complimentary.[2]

But there are two additional dynamics at work. Firstly, Paul emphasizes that his preaching of the gospel does not stem from his own volition; his calling to the Gentiles stems from his commissioning by Christ in a vision (1 Cor 1:17; Gal 1), and, as such, it is the risen Christ who sends Paul to proclaim the Good News. This stands in direct contrast to the influential Caesar-cult, wherein the ambassadors of the emperor (a "pseudo-lord") were commissioned to proclaim his good-favour throughout the Empire. So, too, the commissioning of a low-status manual worker to proclaim the gospel also stands in sharp contradistinction to the Caesar-cult where the imperial ambassadors, proclaiming the good-news of Caesar, were exclusively men of high rank and status who sought to use fine rhetoric in order to draw to themselves greater honour.[3] Given this context, we may understand more clearly why Paul particularly attacks '*worldly* wisdom' (1:19ff; 3:19ff) and emphasises that the gospel itself is evidence of God's rejection of the wise and powerful in society (1:18ff).

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[1] Although Paul's letters are powerful examples of rhetoric and persuasion he asserts that his preaching was not of this kind. This seems to show that it is not rhetoric in general, but rhetoric of a very specific and well-known kind that he is disavowing.

[2] See further, Welborn 1987a:339f; Walker 1992:84. Moxnes (1988a:64) claims that the main theme of the entire letter can be found in 1:17 (that is, that the power of God is fully revealed in Paul's gospel).

[3] On the imperial cult, Deissmann 1927; Fishwick 1969; Weinstock 1971; Fears 1981; Hendrix 1986. On the relevance of the imperial cult to NT studies, Bowersock 1973; Cuss 1974; Price 1984a; Georgi 1991, Horsley 1997; N. T. Wright 2000a; 2000b; on the strength and influence of the imperial cult in Corinth during the time of Paul, see esp. Johnson 1926; 1931:70-78; Edwards 1933; Wiseman 1979:428-540; Gregory 1993; Spawforth 1994; Witherington 1995:295-298.

Secondly, there is the issue of the relationship between σοφία and the partisan quarrelling over the "authorities" of repute. Why, and in what sense, did each party praise its "own" apostle? Many scholars simply presume that the partisanship was a direct result of the competitiveness over relative values of "wisdom" accorded the different apostles as evidenced in their rhetorical ability. Peter Lampe, for example, uses such reasoning to state of the factions, "Because they apparently valued his "wisdom"...[the] party members praised the wisdom and theological perception of "their" apostle."[1] The problem here is that neither Peter nor Jesus can be adequately shown to possess such Greco-Roman *rhetorical* wisdom of this kind (and this may well relate to the swiftness with which these two figures are simply dismissed from a discussion of the partisanship as an example of Pauline hyperbole).[2] The contrast, and so the *real politik,* of the factionalism is thus seen by many to be solely between the parties of Apollos and Paul.

The scenario may be elucidated better if seen in light of the search for status and honour. As noted above, the pursuit for greater honour has led the Corinthians to affiliate themselves to the named high-status apostles, and the ensuing partisanship has led to jealousy, quarrelling, and division, perhaps over the relative merits of each apostle, and over the "wisdom" of the groups who claim him as their "leader."[3] The obvious means of elevating one's own apostle would then be to highlight the way in which they have

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[1] 1990:118.

[2] So, Hurd 1965:104; Welborn 1987:87; Pogoloff 1992:178f.; Pickett 1997:38. Pogoloff (1992:197) claims, "Paul's rhetoric appears to respond to an exigence of division based upon competition for social status, in which each of the groups of 1:12 claims, or is reacting to others' claims, to have a wiser teacher, i.e. one's whose cultured eloquence indicated and confers status." Elsewhere (pp. 179-180), however, he dismisses the Christ and Cephas parties as an example of Pauline hyperbole and the centre of attention of his monograph is upon the figures of Paul and Apollos. As noted above (section 1.1), Pogoloff's focus upon rhetoric and social status, although usefully identified as a suitable lens with which to view 1 Corinthians 1-4, is unduly limiting for the letter as a whole, for it cannot help to explicate chapters 5-16, despite the fact that Paul's rhetorical *appeal* is evidenced throughout the letter (M. M. Mitchell 1991). However, viewing the wider matrix of social competition within both Corinth and the believing community through the lens of honour allows a more coherent analysis of the whole letter.

[3] On the importance of collective/group honour, pp. 68-69 above; Pitt-Rivers 1968:506; L. J. White 1986:77.

ascribed/acquired honour and to focus primarily on the aspects which are most superior. The problem for the Apollos group would be that in general and *relative* terms, Apollos may well have been considered as having the least honour status of the four named apostles. In attempting to overcome this imbroglio, the Apollos-group would certainly have to emphasize his honour status in terms of his most positive and easily recognizable attributes, which may correspond to those highlighted by Luke: his eloquence, his fervour in the spirit, his great learning, and his vigorous and successful defence of the Christ-movement in open public debate (Acts 18).[1] As noted, these very attributes were, of course, associated with the philosophers, sophists, and rhetors accorded statuses of great honour. So, simply in order to elevate their own apostle, the Apollos group would naturally want to compare all of the apostles with respect to rhetorical ability, something which would have been done as a matter of course within their cultural milieu. The important cultural emphasis upon the great value of rhetoric may also have meant that the Apollos party was dominant in terms of size, and this would have enabled it to place the debate over the relative merits of the apostles onto an agenda which most suited them; i.e., in a direct comparison of rhetorical ability. Here, there could be little doubt that Apollos had the greatest status.[2]

Certainly, the attack on Paul's apostleship appears to be the result of competitive jockeying for honour within the church on the part of at least some and perhaps even many of its members; and with it, a preference for leadership that better exemplified the qualities of wisdom and eloquence. On this reading, the primary resistance to Paul reflected in 1 Cor

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[1] That Luke highlights such significant attributes over-and-against Paul suggests that this description may be historically accurate (although it is of interest that Luke can write of Apollos' fervour in the spirit while he has not yet received the baptism of the Spirit, Acts 18:25; see Haenchen 1971:549-551).

[2] The disparagement of Paul's personal bearing (as noted above) is possibly a concomitant of his poor rhetorical style, for the link between physiognomy and both eloquence and intelligence is uniformly attested in Greek and Roman literature from as early as Homer (see Forbes 1986). Superior physical qualities commended an orator and were likely to move an audience to his favour, while physical defects did just the opposite (see Sen. *Ep.* 95.65).

1-4 was triggered by, and centred upon, negative responses to his public speaking by the Apollos group. This negative verdict of Paul—both his physical appearance and his speaking itself were deficient, even contemptible, by the sophisticated standards of Greek rhetoric (section 1.3)—meant that Paul was perhaps an embarrassment. He fell woefully short by the stringent criteria of genuine Greek eloquence, and some of the Corinthians may have found Paul's all too public deficiencies a painful liability.[1] These status-conscious Corinthians apparently harboured few reservations about rendering a negative judgement of Paul's abilities as a speaker; they perceived him in much the same light as they perceived other itinerant speakers, as fair game for their evaluations. In short, there was little to commend him and, for many, he was seen as having little honour and status. It is likely that much of the underlying discontent and dissatisfaction with Paul emerged after his departure, for the reservations that some of the Corinthians may have had about Paul from the beginning—reservations about him personally (despite the fact that they found the gospel he preached worthy of acceptance)—became more pronounced. Within a climate of partisanship, neophyte believers may not have had the spiritual maturity to appreciate the radical paradox of Paul's gospel, and instead gravitated to one of the other parties (particularly that of Apollos). It was perhaps inevitable that this valuing of status and the symbols of status had the potential to be imported into a believing community,[2] but what is surprising is it destructive capacity. Here, Christ-followers sought to advance their status not

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[1] From the time of the early Empire, increasing stress was placed on an orator's *parousia* ("presence"), that is, his appearance, gestures, voice, and delivery. Quintillion's words are almost a paraphrase of the Corinthians' complaints against Paul, "[Good delivery] is hampered by incurable speech impediments...physical uncouthness may be such that no art can remedy it, while a weak voice is incompatible with first-rate excellence in delivery..." (11.3.12f). On the crucial importance of delivery, cf. Cic. *De or.* 3.56.213 and *Brut.* 38.142, where Cicero writes that Demosthenes regarded delivery as of the greatest significance. It is interesting to note how 2 Corinthians carries on this theme in several sections, e.g. 2:14—6:13 and 10:1—13:10.

[2] Hock 1980; Meeks 1983:51-73; A. D. Clarke 1993:89-107.

only with claims about belonging to this or that noted leader, but also with demonstrations of their own special religious wisdom and spiritual power.

The Corinthians may also have been especially offended by Paul's attempt to support himself by continuing his trade (1 Cor 4:11-12; 9:6; Acts 18:1-4). In the first-century it was socially acceptable for a teacher to earn a living by charging fees, or by dependency on some wealthy patron, or even by begging.[1] Paul, however, refused to accept financial support from the Corinthians, even though he claimed the right to it (1 Cor 9:3-18), but at the same time he accepted help from the Macedonians (2 Cor 11:8-9).[2] He was thus perceived as demeaning both himself and the congregation (2 Cor 11:7, 19-11; 12:13-15), and later, while encouraging the Corinthians to contribute to a relief fund for the church in Jerusalem, he was even suspected of raising money under false pretences (2 Cor 12:16-18). Paul's refusal of the Corinthians' gifts of financial help would invariably have resulted in a loss of honour and status for both parties, and this certainly led to some kind of rupture in their relationship. If the exchange of gifts was construed as building alliances, the refusal of help could only do otherwise.[3]

Thus, in 1 Corinthians 1-4 Paul's primary concern is to undermine this dominant Apollos party. He must do so in terms of their own agenda, by a critique of the merits of Greco-Roman rhetoric. But he must also undermine any agenda which divides the body of Christ. Paul does so with a general critique of those making honour claims which are not Christ-centred, for he asserts that such partisan behaviour in "belonging" to men of higher

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[1] In Philostratus' *Lives* it is learned that exacting payment for lectures or from listeners was a common sophistic practice. On the other hand, students of these sophists were like some of the Corinthians in their willingness, and even insistence, on paying fees. See Philostr. *Lives* 494; Dio Chrys. *Or* 54.1; Lim 1987; Pogoloff 1992.

[2] Paul refers to such help, or to his hope of receiving it in Rom 15:24; 1 Cor 16:6; 2 Cor 1:16; see P. Marshall 1987.

[3] See Horrell 1996:116-117.

status merely parallels their pagan cultural milieu (3:3-4), and demonstrates the Corinthians' immaturity in the ways of God (they are "infants in Christ," 3:1-4). In this way, Paul's descriptive terminology of σοφοί for the Corinthians points ironically to what they themselves purport to be the correct and most suitable pursuit of honour.[1] Each group is praising their own wisdom and theological perception in "recognizing" the putative higher status (in whatever way), of their own apostle. This is brought out most clearly in 3:18-21, "Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise...So let no one boast about human leaders."[2] The deceptive cultural constraints of pursuing honour are leading the Corinthians to employ human wisdom in developing associations with high-status apostles, leading to a situation of "boasting" (of self and of one's apostle), and so of being "puffed-up" in favour of one apostle and against another (4:6).

2.4 The Paradox of the Cross

Paul's reaction to the party strife is perhaps somewhat surprising for he allots only eight verses to it (1:10-17) and does not return to it until 3:3.[3] In between, it is not mentioned. Why? In 1:18 Paul begins to unravel the Corinthians' world-view which is centred upon the pursuit of honour in contrast with that of his own world-view centred upon "the word of the cross." Outside of 1 Corinthians and Galatians, Paul uses the language of "cross/crucifixion" only in Philippians 2:8b (a Pauline gloss?), 3:18, and Romans 6:6. There

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[1] 1 Cor 1:19, 20, 25, 26, 27; 3:10, 18, 19, 20; 6:5.
[2] 3:18, 21a; cf. 4:10.
[3] Conzelmann (1975:39) refers to this section as a "circular" composition while Wuellner (1979:185) sees 1:19-3:21 as a "major digression" (referring to it as a "ring-composition"). However, if we take seriously the connection between partisanship and the competitive jostling for honour, then 1:18ff. may seem less of a digression.

are three references to the cross in the deutero-Paulines.[1] Elsewhere in the NT, leaving aside the Passion narratives, there are only scattered references to Jesus' crucifixion[2] and just a few references to the cross within the context of discipleship.[3] But nowhere in the NT is the image of the crucified Christ so finely drawn and so important for the argument as in 1 Corinthians, and it is not surprising to find that this section of Paul's letter has the highest concentration of cross/crucifixion language in the Pauline corpus and within the NT.[4]

It is evident that Paul attaches special importance to the fact that Jesus was crucified and that he *continues* to be the crucified one (thus the perfect tenses in 1:23 and 2:2). Yet he does not here interpret the death on the cross as an act of atonement for sins (which becomes evident later, 8:11; 11:24; 15:3); rather, his specific point is that the crucified Christ discloses the very nature of God's power and wisdom, and hence, that the cross is definitive in an understanding of the very nature of God.[5] For God's self-disclosure in the cross places all human pretensions to power and wisdom under judgement, including, quite particularly, all "religious" claims and expectations. This is the point Paul is making when he contrasts the kerygma's offer of "Christ crucified" with the religious "signs" and "wisdom" so esteemed by the world (1:22-25). If this cross—in the world only a sign of utter shame and weakness—is indeed the defining event of God's power and wisdom, then every human pretension which sets itself up against these is foolishness (1:26-31). And, no less certainly, God's self-disclosure in the cross establishes a radically new paradigm for life in this age.[6]

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[1] Col 1:20; 2:14; Eph 2:16.
[2] Mt 20:19; Lk 24:7, 20; Acts 2:36; 4:10; Heb 6:6; 12:2; Rev 11:8.
[3] Mk 8:34//Mt 16:24//Lk 9:23; Mt 10:38; Lk 14:27.
[4] 1 Cor 1:13-2:8 has six references in 27 verses (cf. Gal 5:11-6:14, five times in 30 verses). Paul's focus throughout the letter is on the saving event effected by Christ's death (8:11; 11:26; 15:3), and especially on his crucifixion (1:13, 17, 18, 23; 2:2, 8; cf. 5:7), which is variously asserted to be "for you" (1:13; 11:24) or "for our sins" (15:3).
[5] Cf. Cousar 1990a:172.
[6] See especially, Dahl 1967:332ff.; Barbour 1979:62-70; Cousar 1990a; Fee 1993:41f.; Furnish 1993, 1999; Horrell 1996; Hays 1997.

Certainly, that Paul lays emphasis upon the cross (1:17-2:8) to portray the focus of his gospel is by no means incidental, either to the contrast that he is drawing between God's wisdom and the world's or to the rhetorical strategy that he is pursuing.[1] Even if the Corinthians are already familiar with his emphasis on the cross, as he claims (2:2), they could hardly fail to be surprised and even disarmed by what they would certainly regard as inappropriate references to it in this context.

Within the Greco-Roman cults to which most of the Corinthians had once belonged, cultic images were usually appealing symbols, of fertility, life, and power—a stalk of grain, a basket of fruit, or an erect phallus.[2] Conversely, a cross, the horrific instrument of execution, would be identified immediately by anyone in Roman Corinth with shame, weakness, failure, and death.[3] But paradoxically, in and through the cross of Christ comes salvation.[4] For though cursed by the OT law and denounced by the world, the shamed crucified Christ, is, through the resurrection, granted honour as the one true Son of God.[5] Paul's proclamation of Christ crucified shatters both the Israelite and Greco-Roman world-view—for this utterly shameless act is transformed into one of superlative honour. Unsurprisingly, the word which Paul preaches is scandalous (1 Cor 1:17, 23), and Paul knows that this is the case. In employing the vocabulary of honour and shame he admits that such activity is foolish ("We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ," 1 Cor 4:10), but such folly is now to be identified with Christ's own humiliation.

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[1] Betz (1986:36-38, with reference to Galatians although the same could be said of 1 Corinthians); A. R. Brown 1995.

[2] See Ar. *Ach.* 243; August. *De civ. D.* 7.21. On the Dionysiac and Attic cults, *OCD* 212, 476, 1153.

[3] Because it is not found in any of the traditional statements about Jesus' death on which Paul has drawn (e.g. 1 Cor 5:7; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3), he may himself be the one who introduced it into the community's preaching.

[4] See Fee 1993:42-45.

[5] For this reason the power and with it the status of the OT law is at an end—salvation is now outside the law, see Meeks 1983:180. On status reversal rituals see Malina/Neyrey 1991a.

Given the exigencies of the situation at Corinth, we may now comprehend why Paul devotes such considerable space to the contrast between *worldly* wisdom and the wisdom of God displayed in the cross, for he does so in three ways. Firstly, he declares that the word of the cross is the means whereby God has rendered foolish the wisdom of the world (v. 20b; in fulfilment of Isaianic prophecy, Isa 29:14 LXX). It is a word which appears as foolishness to the entire world, yet paradoxically it is manifest as the very power and wisdom of God. To those who consider themselves wise in the eyes of the world, Paul argues that the gospel, with the cross at its centre, is diametrically opposed to worldly power and wisdom.[1] Secondly, in vv. 26-31, Paul points to the Corinthians themselves as evidence of this truth. Verse 26, often the starting point for sociological analyses of the community, describes a group comprised largely but not exclusively of the lower classes.[2] For Paul, this provides empirical proof that the strength and wisdom revered by human society are rejected by God, for through the proclamation of the cross, God repudiates those who are considered strong and wise by the world.[3] Finally, Paul describes his own preaching as characterized by 'weakness, fear and trembling,' and insists that it was not a message of human wisdom (2:1-5). The kerygma *is* wisdom, but not a wisdom 'of this age,' nor 'of the rulers of this age, who are being brought to nothing' (2:6). Paul insists that the apostles, the proclaimers of the gospel, are only servants (3:5; 4:1), and not to be exalted as heads of factions. Indeed, Paul's experience as an apostle stands in contradistinction to a life of success and honour (4:8-13). It is the crucified Messiah in whom the true character of God's wisdom is disclosed and through whom God's saving power is at work. Paul's prime objective is to deflate the spiritual arrogance of those in the community who claim to be endowed with special

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[1] Fung 1980:247-248.
[2] See the recent debate between Meggitt, Theissen and D. B. Martin on this issue, section 1.1 above.
[3] P. Lampe 1990:126.

wisdom and knowledge about God, and therefore to be deserving of special honours and status.[1]

An analysis of a number of key texts in 1 Corinthians 1-4 will further help to draw out the nuances of Paul's argument.

2.4.1 1 Cor 1:18-25: God's "folly"—a Crucified Messiah

In 1 Cor 1:18 Paul speaks of the *foolishness* of the cross and contrasts this with its inherent *power* for salvation. The pairing of the two terms is unusual, for the expected partner to "folly" is not "power" but "wisdom." Perhaps Paul does this for rhetorical effect, to begin to undermine the credibility of worldly wisdom in the eyes of the Corinthians. Certainly, his choice of opposites is unconventional, especially in light of the cross as his central subject, but it is not simply the pairing of folly with power that surprises, but the attribution of power to what is otherwise the ultimate symbol of shame. In making the substitution "power" for "wisdom" Paul has said something new and, within his cultural milieu, epistemologically offensive about the nature of salvation. It is now not the wisdom of the wise that "saves," rather, it is the "power of the cross," a formulation that is nonsensical in the perspective of worldly wisdom. Moreover, Paul has located the power of the cross not simply in the past event itself but in the present λόγος about the event that continually re-presents itself to the hearer/reader.

As an example, Paul moves on to quote a text from Isaiah (29:14) where Yahweh declares that he will destroy the wisdom of the wise and set aside the understanding of the

[1] Furnish 1999:37f.

prudent.[1] Commentators do little but affirm the place of the text in the hyperbolic scheme of Paul's antithesis against wisdom or rhetoric,[2] but its wider context is of great interest. For the primary *reason* for Yahweh's declaration that he will set aside the wisdom of the wise and prudent is one inextricably linked with notions of honour and shame. Speaking through the prophet, Yahweh declares:

> This people draw nigh to me with their mouth, and they *honour* me with their lips, but their heart is far from me: but in vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men...Therefore...I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and I will hide the understanding of the prudent...thus saith the Lord concerning the house of Jacob, whom he set apart from Abraham, Jacob shall not now be *ashamed*, neither shall his face now turn pale (פָּנָיו[3]). (Isa 29:13-14, 22 LXX, italics mine.)

Israel's worship of Yahweh had moved from the sincere and genuine, to acts of mere pretence and duplicity, and the superlative honour that Yahweh should receive has been replaced by religious hypocrisy. As such, he is now dishonoured and his name sullied (cf. Isa 29:23). But Israel feels no shame or contrition for such actions and refuses to repent for the disgrace and dishonour brought to Yahweh. Indeed, Yahweh claims that the people are analogous to "apostate children," for counsel (βουλή) is made through their own wisdom and independent of Yahweh or his Spirit (Isa 30:1).[4] Such human endeavours have led Israel

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[1] The quotation follows the LXX, except that for *I will set aside* the LXX has *I will hide* (Paul's variation may be due to Ps 32:10, LXX). Paul may have both texts in mind, for the Isaiah passage refers to the human wisdom of the Hebrews, while that of the Psalm refers in a similar way to pagans. Cf. also the similar perspective of wisdom in Isa 19:11 LXX within a context of honour-shame (19:9; 20:4-5). See further, Barrett 1971:52; Conzelmann 1975:42; Fee 1987:69-70; Furnish 1993:65.

[2] See Barrett 1971:52; Conzelmann 1975:42; Fee 1987:69-70; M. M. Mitchell 1991:213ff.; Pogoloff 1992:160; Litfin 1994:197-198; Dunn 1995:41, 96; Witherington 1995:109. Hays (1997:29) does, to some extent, elucidate the wider OT social context.

[3] Which was a sign of shame; cf. BDB *sv* "covered with shame."

[4] Cf. Paul's criticism of the Corinthians in 1 Cor 4:5 where the "counsels of the heart" (βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν) will be disclosed and judged by the Lord.

to look, not to Yahweh, but to Egypt for military protection; an action which has further shamed Yahweh, who now pronounces judgement upon Israel,

> For the protection of Pharaoh shall be to you a *disgrace*, and there shall be a reproach to them that trusts in Egypt...In vain shall they labour in seeking to a people, which shall not profit them for help, but shall be for a *shame* and reproach. (Isa 30:3, 5 LXX, italics mine.)

Instead of listening to the word of the prophet and seeking counsel from Yahweh, Israel employs only its own human wisdom in making decisions, and looks to others (i.e., Egypt, a nation of greater power and status) to safeguard its own security and honour. In Paul's perception this is analogous to the causes of the Corinthian partisanship, for in the determination to use their own wisdom in the pursuit of honour, many in the community are behaving in a manner similar to the ancient Israelites. One now perceives how and why Paul is able to parallel "foolishness" with the "power of God." In anticipation of the military might and aggression of the Assyrian army, Israel, using worldly wisdom, prefers to place its faith in its strong ally and neighbour. In such a context, placing one's faith solely in Yahweh may indeed have been construed by many as foolishness, but, paradoxically, the salvation of Israel is wholly immersed in such an endeavour, for salvation can be wrought only by the power of Yahweh. Similarly, for the Corinthians, the judgement that the cross is folly implies a contrary perception of power associated with those Greco-Roman social values wherein strength and honour were highly esteemed, and weakness and shame disdained. But this is Paul's point in 1:18. God has annulled all conventional "rules" of wisdom, power, reputation and value, and the typology of Israelite understanding in the Assyrian crisis is being mirrored in the Corinthians' perception of God's power evident in and through the cross. As F. F. Bruce writes (1971:36), "nothing could be more subversive

of these canons in the first century Greco-Roman world than the proclamation of a crucified man exalted as Lord."

In 1:20, the σοφός is the winner in the competition for honour, a figure familiar in Greco-Roman literature. In contrast, when the word or message that Paul brings is said to be foolish, he is comparing himself to the "fool"—the antonym of the σοφός. Herein, the apostle is the loser in the competition for the status of being considered wise (that is, he does not use speech in accordance with cultural expectations),[1] and, instead, asserts his apparent low-status in relation to those who claim positions of higher-status through their wisdom and partisanship. But from such rhetoric of weakness, paradoxically, flows power. The notion of "foolishness" is introduced by Paul to set up a paradox about his "word of the cross," and the shameful status of a crucified criminal. Such speech must be considered weak and foolish, for it celebrates the opposite of all those values enshrined in the notions of honour. Here, Paul forces the context away from such values and highlights the *power* of such foolishness for it demarcates the community's *very existence and self-identity*: "to us who are being saved... we preach Christ crucified... to those who are called" (1:18, 24).

Paul now turns to the γραμματεύς (1:20), the Israelite scribe or scholar who claims to have "knowledge" about God.[2] Many of the social roles of the scribe in the Hellenistic period are outlined in Ben Sirach, and of interest here is the use of wisdom in gaining honour. The author writes of the scribe,

> A wise person will have *praise* heaped upon him,
> and all who see him will call him happy.

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[1] See Pogoloff 1992:ch. 5.

[2] See Fung 1980:247-248; Engberg-Pederson 1987:562f.; Welborn 1987; Pogoloff 1992:163ff. In literature of the intertestamental period and the first-century CE, the scribe is equivalent to the sage, elder, or even office-holder in the Temple and courts (1 Macc 7:12-13; *T. Levi* 8:17; Jos. *Ant.* 12:142; Lk 11:42-52).

> One who is wise among his people will inherit *honor*,
> and his name will live forever.
> Many will *praise* his understanding;
> his *fame* endures to the end of the age
> His memory will not disappear,
> and his *name* will live through all generations.
> Nations will speak of his wisdom,
> and the congregation will proclaim his *praise*.
> When he lives he is one out of a thousand,
> and when he dies he leaves a *good name*.
> A wise person by his speech advances himself. (*Sir* 37:24, 26; 39:9-11; 20:27, italics mine.)[1]

In a way typical of Greek and Hellenistic thought, the author connects the cultured and eloquent σοφός to the attributes of honour, praise, and reputation.

In the NT period, scribes are presented as scholars of scripture frequently involved in debate.[2] The scribes of OT Israel were associated with godly prophets and wise men (σοφοί, Mt 23:24), but in the Gospel traditions the scribes of the first-century CE are presented as having a close relationship with the Jerusalem oligarchy (the chief priests and elders), with whom they are concerned to uphold the socio-political and religious status quo.[3] The Gospel writers criticize the scribes for demanding signs from Jesus of his power and authority and particularly for their overt demonstration of status. They enjoy taking the seats of honour in the synagogues and at dinners—such rewards being a concomitant of their socio-political influence (Mk 12:39; Lk 20:46; Mt 23:6; cf. 1 Cor 11:20-21). As such, the γραμματεύς fits into the social matrix of people seeking means and ways of *increasing* their honour.

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[1] On Judean scribes during the Second-Temple period, see esp. Schams 1998.
[2] Mk 9:11, 14; 12:28-35; Mt 2:4; 7:29; 17:10; 23:2-3.
[3] See Saldarini 1988, Mk 8:31; 11:27; 14:43; 15:1; Mt 2:4; 16:21; 26:57; 27:41; Lk 9:22; 19:47; 20:1; 22:66; Acts 4:5.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul recognizes that the Judeans demand signs, i.e. powerful proofs from above, but the gospel proclamation offers them just one—that of the cross. As this is seen as weak and shameful (and so a σκάνδαλον; it is scandalous to link God to such shame), the word of the cross shatters Judean expectations. But, paradoxically, it also brings salvation, for when the Judean accepts the shamed and cursed crucified Christ the power of God is revealed; that is, after their human theological categories are made redundant, the word of the cross turns out to be the power of life for them (1:18b). Herein lays the dialectic and paradox of the cross. So, too, the Greek search for wisdom is offered in the wisdom of Christ crucified, but, likewise, this is perceived as foolishness and makes God appear as a fool in Greco-Roman eyes.

In sum, Paul asserts that the world is perishing in its own wisdom. This is clear in 1:22 where the Judean demands signs. One asks, for what? They demand that "religious" claims be legitimized by powerful divine "proofs." The issue for Paul is that the Judeans demand tangible evidence whenever anyone asserts something about the nature of God, or does something in his name, or makes a claim on his behalf. Their frequent demand is for miraculous signs from heaven, the literary examples of which, both biblical and extra-biblical, are numerous.[1] And this is in sharp contradistinction to the rhetorically deficient and physically poor apostle who stands before them and the message which he proclaims.[2]

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[1] E. g., Mk 8:11-12; Mt 12:38; 16:1; Lk 11:16; esp. Jn 6:30. OT examples include 2 Ki 20:1-11// Jos. *Ant.* 10.28-29; Jdg 6:36-40; Ex 4// Philo *Mos.* 1.76; Jos. *War* 1.331-332; *Ant.* 20.167-170; Sifre *Deut* 18.19, par. 177 (108a); *b. Bab.M* 59b; *m. Pes.R* 162a. See also Montefiore/Loewe 1938:ch. 13.

[2] On this "divine reversal" see P. Lampe 1990:122f.

2.4.2 1 Cor 1:26-31: God's "folly"—the Corinthian Believers

Paul begins this paragraph by reminding the Corinthian congregation of their social origins, but in 1:27-28 he turns it into a theological statement and asserts that God's act of choosing *them* parallels the same design as the cross itself—to "shame" and "nullify" the very values in which they are currently "boasting." The thrust of Paul's reasoning throughout these verses is upon the application of 1:18-25 to cultural notions of honour-shame and their radical inversion in the presence of God (1:29). Although the passage remains a *crux interpretum* for an analysis of the social-status of the Corinthian community,[1] Paul's point here is more to highlight an honour-based *point of comparison* than delineate any specific social hierarchy. As outlined in the Introduction, cultural values of honour were relative not absolute, and Paul's rhetorical force, to the point of irony (or sarcasm), is not to be understated at this point.

The descriptive terms applied to some of the Corinthians (σοφοί, δυνατοί, and εὐγενεῖς[2]), are all characteristics of those honoured in Greco-Roman society.[3] The prepositional phrase κατὰ σάρκα, which qualifies "wise" is intended for all three terms (cf. "of this age," v. 20) and is a reflection of those consciously striving for status.[4] The σοφός has been discussed above. Δυνατός, applied to persons, frequently has the connotation of `prominent` and `influential,` i.e., those of superiority, importance, authority; those who were distinguished.[5] Sanger (1985, following Theissen and Judge), also points out

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[1] E.g., Theissen 1982; Meeks 1983; Meggitt 1998 et al.
[2] LSJ *sv, well-born, of noble race, of high descent*; BAGD *sv, well-born, high-born.*
[3] 1 Cor 1:26 suggests that the majority of the Christ-followers were neither wealthy nor part of the elite, a fact supported by Paul's request that they put money aside so as to be able to contribute to the collection—something that presupposes they did not have much surplus (1 Cor 16:1-2; Chow 1992:185). Furthermore, 7:21-22 clearly suggests that there were a number of slaves in the community.
[4] For the use of σάρξ in Paul, see Schweizer *TDNT* 7.125-138.
[5] Of powerful prominent people, see Acts 25:5; Jos. *War* 1.242; Philo *Mos.* 1.49; BAGD 208-209. The term is often used of God (Pss 23:8; 44:4, 6; 119:4; Zeph 3:17).

that the word was used as a technical term for political power derived from economic influence. His analysis overlaps with that of Ramsay MacMullen who claims that it was "the common term for magnates," the upper-class landlords whose economic and political power dominated the life of the indigent.[1] Similarly, Forbes (1986:19) notes that in a wide cross-section of Hellenistic literature (and in Paul) the term carries, "strong social connotations. 'Weakness' is the state of those without power or status, and 'strength' is the state of those who do have status." Hence, δυνατός is a term directly related to notions of honour.

While the first two terms of Paul's triad (σόφος, δυνατός) parallel those found in Jeremiah (9:23f.), whom Paul will soon quote (1 Cor 1:31); his third term, εὐγενής, as compared to Jeremiah's πλούσιος, marks a note of subtle contrast. For while some of the Corinthians may well have been *relatively* wealthy, it is unlikely that any would have been of noble lineage.[2] Indeed, as Sanger (1985) rightly points out, εὐγενής is not an equivalent term for wealthy; rather (as his numerous textual parallels demonstrate), it is used exclusively to refer to honour or high prestige, not to wealth alone. Affluence neither guaranteed high status nor demonstrated evidence of high lineage. More recently, Paul's triad of terms has been viewed through a different lens, for while the terms δυνατός and εὐγενής may have originally referred to the traditional Greek aristocracy in their politico-

[1] 1974:163, n. 52; cf. LSJ 453. See also Welborn's analysis of δυνατός (1987:97).

[2] Social stratification within the Roman empire is difficult to assess, and conclusions generally remain tentative and qualified. Applying any such conclusions to the Christ-movements is fraught with further difficulties due to paucity of evidence. Such ambiguity is evidenced in the work of Meeks who, while asserting that the typical Christ-follower is a "fairly well-off artisan" or small trader (1983:65), nevertheless states, "...the evidence we have is fragmentary, random and often unclear. We cannot draw up a statistical profile of the Pauline communities nor fully describe the social level of a single Pauline Christian" (1983:72-3; cf. Theissen 1982:73). The survey of the social level of typical Pauline communities carried out by both Theissen and Meeks yields little empirical data and what patterns do emerge remain cautious. Although Paul names a few who seem to have been modestly wealthy (e.g. Gaius and Erastus), it is unlikely that these could genuinely be considered to fit the category of the aristocratic "elite." Even Erastus would not seem to fit the designation of εὐγενής in 1:26. Within the believing communities generally, there is little evidence for ascertaining that anyone was among the social elite, nor clear indication of the status "levels" of any who may be at the bottom (e.g. slaves, 1 Cor 7). See esp. Meggitt 1998. I would concur with Pogoloff that "even the highest status Corinthians are only of middling status...[and] must cope with their relative *lack* of status rather than their relative *boast* of status" (1992:210-211, italics his).

economic and social dimensions, i.e., the magnates and nobles; by Paul's time such terms were also used in a spiritualized sense in reference to an intellectual or spiritual "aristocracy." The *truly* "powerful," "nobly born," and "wealthy" were "the wise"—the definition of which has been Paul's main point of contention since 1:19.[1] In Stoic thought, for example, only the wise man was truly "wealthy" and a "king,"[2] and Dio Chrysostom complains that those called "noble" and "well-born" were often labelled as such *simply* because they had wealth and status.[3] Even Hellenistic Judeans may well have assimilated this philosophical spiritualization of the old aristocratic ideals into their own devotion of God or God's σοφία, for the Wisdom of Solomon maintains that heavenly σοφία confers (kingly) authority, riches, noble birth, and being "wise."[4] That the aristocratic qualities of wisdom, power, noble birth, wealth, and so forth were commonly used in this spiritualized sense, particularly in connection with σοφία, is highly suggestive for Paul's argument in 1:26-31, which is addressed to his assembly in what was perhaps the most status conscious city in the Roman empire.[5]

In addition, there is one other point of interest in this paragraph which may address the above. In 4:8ff., Paul addresses the *whole* congregation (4:6, 8, 10) remarking upon their putative wealth, kingship (v. 8), wisdom, strength, and honour (v. 10). These must be spiritual values for they are "in Christ" (4:10; cf. the parallel in 1:30). While most scholars

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[1] Certainly, the original sense of the terms do not fit the current situation in Roman Corinth, where the old Corinthians nobles had given way to new magnates, who were hardly "nobly born," in some cases even being the offspring of *liberti*. See de Vos 1999.

[2] Horsley 1998:52.

[3] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 15.29-30.

[4] See also the Wisdom of Solomon on authority, 6:20-21; 10:14; cf. 7:7; on riches, 7:8, 11, 13-14; 8:5, 18; 10:11; on noble birth, 8:3. Note the link of many of these texts with the notion of honour. In honouring wisdom, the king is given an eternal kingdom (6:20-21), and for the righteous man who is persecuted and imprisoned, wisdom grants him kingship, power, and "everlasting honour" (10:14). Because of wisdom, the pious "...shall have glory among the multitudes and honor in the presence of the elders..." (8:10). The reward for the righteous in their pursuit of wisdom would appear to be clear; it is the granting of honour.

[5] While this "spiritual" view is undermined by Paul's application of κατὰ σάρκα to notions of wisdom, power, and nobility, there may well be the nuance of both aspects in Paul's thinking.

comment upon Paul's use of `irony` and `sarcasm` at this point,[1] such language has not been used of 1:26, despite the fact that Theissen notes the strong links between 1:26 and 4:10.[2] The problem for Theissen's sociological analysis (and for those who follow his 1982 thesis) is that were the notions of `irony` and `sarcasm` to be applied equally to 1:26 (i.e., that in reality *none* were wise, powerful, or of noble birth) his analysis would lose much of its force;[3] after all, 1:26 is pivotal for Theissen.[4] Hence, the meaning intended by Paul in 1:26 is perhaps more elusive than has traditionally been assumed, and, as Theissen recently reminds us (2003:375), "We must never forget that Paul's intention is not to deliver sociological information, but to direct the thoughts and attitudes of his audience." If Paul *is* employing irony or sarcasm at this point, then the verse can tell us nothing concrete about the social constituency of the congregation other than that perhaps some had aspirations or pretensions of grandeur. Henceforth, I assume that the `minority` within the congregation are those only of *relatively* higher status, but certainly not comparable with the aristocratic elite in the city.[5]

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[1] So, Meeks 1983:128; Fee 1987:172 ("biting irony"), 176 ("total irony"), 184; Welborn 1987:88 ("savage irony"); Barclay 1992:64; Roetzel 1993:229; Witherington 1995:137-138; Horrell 1996:136; Hays 1997:70 ("withering sarcasm"); Pickett 1997:47; Horsley 1998:67, 69 ("biting sarcasm"), 70, 77.

[2] The three adjectives in 4:10 (wise, strong, honoured) overlap those in 1:26 (wise, powerful, well-born). Theissen writes (1982:72), "Here again we find the same three categories—the wise, the powerful, the esteemed—even if the terminology has been modified" On both occasions Paul speaks to the *whole* congregation (1:26, 30; 4:6, 8, 10), cf. Theissen 1982:73.

[3] By irony I mean here the expression of meaning by language of the opposite or different tendency. On irony in antiquity see recently Nanos 2002:34 who distinguishes *Situational, Verbal,* and *Dissimulative irony*. Of use here may be his definitions of Verbal irony ("saying something but meaning something else in a way that explores the tension between two or more meanings...so as to create an unanticipated result"), or Dissimulative irony (a form of verbal irony which "employs exaggeration, that is, over- or understatement, for the purpose of undermining or inverting [a] portrayal").

[4] See esp. 1982:72. Fee (1987:81-82, esp. n. 15) critiques Theissen on this point but fails to pursue it. See further, Meggitt's critique of Theissen's thesis, 1998:97-118. Meeks (1983:122) claims that there is extensive use of irony and sarcasm throughout the letter.

[5] See Barrett 1971:58. Gail O'Day (1990) argues that 1:27-28 does not refer to the social standing of the majority of the Corinthians, but to the cross of Christ. However, she does not explain why the singular of 1:17-25 becomes plural in 1:26-28. Yet one may assert that 1:26-28 *includes* the cross and `weak` apostles, as well as the Christ-followers, as theological counterparts to status according to the flesh. The terms *weak* and *contemptible* may also allude to Paul himself as the vehicle that God has chosen to shame the strong and privileged. As demonstrated above, Paul did not fit the popular stereotype of the dynamic orator.

The way forward with these verses may well be to remember, as noted above, that Paul is engaged primarily in a point of comparison. If he is applying a point of irony or sarcasm in 1:26 then the adjectives would refer to the principal attributes of the wealthy and powerful aristocracy in Corinth, those basking in honour at the apex of the imperial order. But while the congregation is composed of middle-to-low status Corinthians, there are those with *pretensions* of aristocracy who are aping the civic elite in the pursuit and search for status and honour. As noted above (p. 87, and n. 3), the influence of the imperial cult in Corinth was very strong, and Paul had already begun to undermine its basic tenets with an emphasis upon the cross of Christ. On this reading, it is the Corinthian congregation as a *whole* which has been chosen to demonstrate God's radical dealings with humanity through the cross; a demonstration that the nature of his wisdom and power is so great as to render the human equivalents irrelevant (1:25).[1] Taken in connection with the overall rhetorical style of chapters 1-4, Paul's reference in 1:26 is most likely to some in the Corinthian assembly who claimed to have attained a certain "aristocratic" *spiritual* status. Indeed, Paul is dealing with issues of spiritual status in several sections of the letter, though, of course, behind or underneath the issues of spiritual status were issues of concrete social-status rooted in particular patterns of social power relations.

With respect to notions of honour-shame, the majority of the congregation had little acquired or ascribed honour but were seeking to enhance what little they had by their association with apostles of high repute. Paul's point is that despite their socially low

[1] On the traditional reading, the role of the high-status Christ-followers in these verses appears to be a source of confusion (as in Fung 1980:247-248; and Furnish 1999:42), for the Corinthian "elite," though equally chosen and called, would appear to have *no* role to play at all in the demonstration of God's radical deracination of cultural privileges through the cross. Equally, Paul's assertion that God is now the source of the Corinthians' lives in Christ Jesus, through which they have received righteousness, sanctification, and redemption would not be applicable to them. Paul does not say that the rich, powerful, and well-born are chosen; *only* the foolish, weak, low and despised!

position, God has actually *chosen* them; he is the source of their life in Christ Jesus (1:30), and, as adopted sons, he has imparted to them the gifts of righteousness, sanctification and redemption. In so doing he has torn down all pretensions to worldly honour by the wise, strong, and high-born. Any "boasting" in worldly wisdom, power, and status is now irrelevant and nonsensical before God. Within this divine perspective the civic aristocrats are now dishonoured, because in the first-century world the foolish, weak, and despised discover that they have a divine patron with superlative honour who has ascribed *them* with an honour which is above and beyond that of the putative elite of their social-world. Here, the dishonoured Christ-followers find themselves higher up the ladder of honour.[1] In this new "world-view" the Corinthians should recognize that in Christ Jesus, and through the cross, they are seeing a divine demonstration of the cultural inversion of status and honour.[2] As Theissen writes, "It is precisely the foolish, the weak, and the lowly who are the "wise" within the new frame of reference. They experience a total transformation of their evaluation."[3]

It should be remembered that Paul is likely to have introduced these ideas for a *specific* reason. The competition for honour has led to partisanship which damages the unity of the community, and so Paul attacks this practice at its very core—to declare that such worldly valuations are entirely alien and worthless to God. If God not only overlooks status, but inverts it, then their "boastful" divisive behaviour is absurd in the context of their individual salvation and community origins. Their divine calling must remove entirely all

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[1] The traditional understanding of Paul's 'shaming' language has largely excluded the wider concept of honour in the Greco-Roman world. In this regard see Bultmann *TDNT* 1. 189ff.; Kee 1974:134. Fee (1987:83) is only a little nearer the mark. On honour-shame in the OT see esp. Pedersen 1926, Daube 1956, Joh. Schneider 1972, Kee 1974, Bechtel 1991, Simkins 1996, Stansell 1996, Hobbs 1997.

[2] The concept of God's overturning the established order is deeply rooted in OT traditions (e.g. Ex 15; Jdg 5; 1 Sam 2:1-10; cf. Lk 1:46-55).

[3] 1987:387. Cf. MacMullen 1974:104-120.

human grounds for making such public claims to honour. The use of Jeremiah 9:24 in this context is ideal, but for more reasons than simply a short quote on the redundancy of "boasting" of worldly things before God. The wider social context of the passage parallels much of 1 Corinthians, in that it includes a criticism of adultery (9:2), falsehood (9:3), sin (9:3, 5, 7), disunity (9:4ff., 8), and the pursuit of worldly things (9:13; 10:1ff.; 8:19). Jeremiah declares that "From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain" (8:10), and means by it a gain which is worldly gain. In short, the prophet announces that Judah has forsaken the Lord (9:3, 6, 13; 10:2f.) and so has brought him dishonour, "Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all, they do not even know how to blush" (8:12; NIV). God's response and the ensuing lament of the people of Judah are both articulated in terms of honour-shame, "The wise shall be put to shame..." (8:9). God will restore the honour of his name by bringing upon the nation military disaster whereupon the people of Judah will be scattered amongst the nations (9:16). In so doing, the nation shall be humiliated ("How we are ruined! We are utterly shamed;" 9:19; cf. 10:14), and God's honour will be restored. Jeremiah's categories of criticism levelled against the wise, and the consequent destruction spoken of in terms of honour-shame, parallel those found in 1 Cor 1:27-28.[1]

Paul's fundamental aim is to deny all human grounds for public claims to honour and to proclaim the Lord as the only one in whom "boasting" is appropriate. To those all too

[1] The prayer of Hannah in 1 Kingdoms 2:1-10 LXX is nearly identical to Jer 9:24, and Paul may have both texts in mind at this point. It is difficult to be certain, but if so, it is of interest that there are notions of honour-shame present in Hannah's prayer too. The context of the prayer comes after the birth of her firstborn, Samuel, where the acute shame and "humiliation" (1 Kings 1:11) felt over her inability to conceive was replaced by joy. Her prayer begins with an assertion of the redundancy of human wisdom before God (1 Kings 2:3). Whereas Jeremiah pronounces judgement, Hannah's song celebrates God's gracious blessing and, most significantly, highlights the theme of reversal of status, a theme that has dominated Paul's whole discussion of wisdom and folly, strength and weakness, in 1 Cor 1:18-31. The climax of the prayer is in the lifting up of the lowly to grant them a "throne of glory" (honour, *kabōd*, in the MT, 1 Kingdoms 2:8).

conscious of their lowly status within Corinthian society and their inability to "boast" in their worldly position, Paul announces that God has *chosen* them, and for a specific purpose—to shame the powerful who place great value upon worldly status. And those among the Corinthian congregation who have aspirations or pretensions to the elite of Corinthian civic society are shown quite bluntly that these signs of worldly privilege are precisely what God is destroying. If they wish to count themselves among those called by God they must reject the values which society may enable them to obtain. The symbolic order of the Pauline gospel expressed here stands in sharp contrast to the dominant symbolic order of Roman society. In the latter the poor are despised, and one's "value" is determined by education, wealth and ancestry.[1] The cross, on the other hand, inverts such concepts and demonstrates God's rejection of the world's hierarchy. In short, God's purpose in calling them was to expose as shameful and self-defeating what the world commonly esteems as honourable and ennobling.[2]

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[1] MacMullen 1974:104-120.

[2] See further Engberg-Pederson 1987:562f.; Cousar 1990:170; P. Lampe 1990:127; Fee 1993:42; Furnish 1999:42.

2.4.3 1 Cor 2:6-3:4: God's Wisdom and Glory in the Cross

The argument of this section of the letter, especially Paul's use of corporate language,[1] implies that Paul is, as earlier, addressing the whole church and drawing them into the orbit of the discussion. And, as in the previous section, Paul makes extensive use of irony.[2] He employs the language of the Corinthians themselves, language which is endemic in the congregational jealousy, rivalry and partisanship (such as "wisdom," "spiritual," "mature," etc.), but he does so only to proffer a secret hidden wisdom—a wisdom which turns out to be nothing other than that embodied in the cross of Christ (cf. 1:23-24). It is precisely *this* wisdom, the sole content of God's divine wisdom, which is in the process of reducing to nothing the putative wisdom of mankind and which, as his argument will go on to show, includes the so-called "wisdom" of many of the Corinthians.

Paul claims that the perspicuity of divine wisdom is only for the τέλειοι, a term which appears in Philo and other Judean writings to describe those who are at an advanced stage of spiritual insight and "perfection."[3] It is used as an apparent synonym for "spiritual people" (3:1); and the contrast in 2:14-15 between "those who are spiritual" and "those who are unspiritual" is parallel and synonymous with the distinction between "mature" and "infants" (2:6; 3:1). Since these terms occur distinctively in 1 Corinthians, this must have been language with which some of the Corinthians expressed their own self-understanding; they considered themselves "*spiritual*" people endowed with "spiritual gifts" and having "spiritual" understanding of "spiritual things" (2:14-16; 10:3-4; 12;1; 14:1, 37; 15:44-46).[4]

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[1] "For *our* glory," v. 7; "for those who love him" [i.e., "*us*"], v. 9; "revealed it to *us*," v. 10; and "we have received the Spirit who is from God," v. 12.
[2] So Hays 1997:39; Fee 1987:98-99. Horsley (1998:57) refers to it as sarcasm.
[3] See Peterson 1982.
[4] See especially, Pearson 1973; Horsley 1976, 1977.

An interesting example of the use of τέλειος, especially in relation to its wider context, is found in Wis 9:6.[1] Indeed, the linguistic parallels are so impressive one may contend that Paul had this section of Wisdom in mind when narrating the opening four chapters of 1 Corinthians. The Wisdom text speaks of Lady Wisdom in terms of her "noble birth" (Wis. 8:3, εὐγενής; cf. 1 Cor 1:26), her understanding and prudence (Wis. 8:6, 7, 17, 18, 21, φρόνησις; cf. 1 Cor 4:10), her wealth (Wis. 8:18; cf. 1 Cor 4:8), her knowledge of God (Wis. 8:4, 10:10, γνῶσις), and her wisdom (Wis. 8:5; 9:2, 4, 6, 9, 17, 18). The gaining of Wisdom (i.e., God's wisdom) brings honour (Wis. 8:10; cf. 1 Cor 4:10), glory (Wis. 8:10; 9:10, 11; 10:14; cf. 1 Cor 2:7, 8), strength (Wis. 10:2, 5; cf. 1 Cor 4:10), and the Holy Spirit (Wis. 9:17). The text also predicates the notion of 'kingship' to the righteous seeker of Wisdom (Wis. 8:14; 9:7, 10, 12; 10:2, 14, 16; cf. 1 Cor 4:8). In contradistinction, those without wisdom "will be regarded as nothing" (Wis. 9:6; cf. 1 Cor 1:28), and the ungodly will perish (Wis. 10:6, ἐξαπολλυμένων; cf. 1 Cor 1:18, ἀπόλλυμι). The parallels are striking. In a summary of what is accrued by the gaining of wisdom the writer (who claims himself to be weak, Wis 9:5, ἀσθενής; cf. 1 Cor 1:27) contends,

> Because of her I shall have glory among the multitudes and honor in the presence of the elders, though I am young. I shall be found keen in judgment, and in the sight of rulers I shall be admired... Because of her I shall have immortality and an everlasting remembrance to those who come after me. (Wis 8.10-11, 13)

Here, the pursuit and gaining of wisdom is made in reference to a social framework of honour and status.

[1] Cf. also Wis 6:15.

An additional and highly significant nuance of 1 Cor 2:6-3:4 is that Paul insists upon the import of God's wisdom as "decreed... for our glory" (2:7), and the apostle parallels this statement by reminding the reader of the status of Christ himself—"the Lord of glory" (2:8). The importance of the δόξα-word group for Paul is evidenced in the fact that nearly half of the uses in the NT are found in his epistles;[1] the twelve occurrences in 1 Corinthians being found in each of the main sections of the letter.[2] Paul, following the example of Christ, eschewed the seeking of glory from men and voluntarily accepted dishonour; looking, instead, to the honour and praise which Christ would give him as a future reward.[3] For Paul, the highest duty of man is to glorify and praise God in worship, word and act (1 Cor 6:20; 10:31; cf. Rom 1:21), and the adjective ἔνδοξος (`glorious`) in 1 Cor 4:10 looks back to the OT concept that glory is revealed in the mighty acts of God (on the semantic data see pp. 41-45).

Paul's language in this section has an apocalyptic character (he speaks of divine wisdom as a "hidden mystery," "decreed before the ages," and now "revealed," in "this age").[4] It is this divine wisdom demonstrated in the cross which is in the process of bringing to destruction the (political) rulers of this age; that is, those whose categories of wisdom revolve around earthly power, strength and honour.[5] Ironically, by sending Christ to the

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[1] Δόξα is found 165x in the NT, 77x in Paul. Of these, the Corinthian correspondences account for 31 (12x in 1 Corinthians; 19x in 2 Corinthians). It is found 16x in Romans.

[2] 1 Cor 2:7, 8; 4:10; 10:31; 11:7 (twice), 15; 12:26; 15:43.

[3] His statement in Romans that in the final judgement the righteous would receive "glory and honour and immortality" refers to eternal life itself, Rom 2:7, 10; 5:2.

[4] On 1 Cor 2:7 and 15:51, cf. the parallels with the more technical apocalyptic "mystery," e.g. Dan 2:18-19, 27-28; 1QS 3:13-4:25; 1QpHab 7:1-5.

[5] Ἀρχων can have a range of meanings. Although elsewhere in the NT it refers straightforwardly to human rulers (Rom 13:3; Lk 23:13, 35; 24:20; Acts 4:8-10, 26; 13:27-28; Jn 7:26), the word could also refer to superhuman beings (e.g., the angelic "princes" behind the Persian and Greek empires in Dan 10:13, 20). In 1 Corinthians 15 the parallelism, including both the verb "destroy" and the related nouns "rulers"/"rule"/"authority"/"power" suggests that "the rulers of this age" in 2:8 should be taken to include potentially "every rule and authority and power" that remains hostile to God. In an earthly sense the rulers of

cross, the imperial rulers had themselves implemented God's plan for their own end and destruction; for this act of God had a stark political dimension by which God was in the process of defeating the "rulers of this age."[1] The cross reveals that "the scheme of this world" is coming to an end (1 Cor 7:31), for, as the cross unmasks the folly of human wisdom, it establishes within the *present* age the power of the age *to come*. This is why Paul can say of the present that "the ends of the ages have come" (10:11), and of the word of the cross, that it is "the gospel" (1:17-18) wherein the saving power of God is at work.

In sum, Paul maintains that because the Corinthians have the Spirit, and thus the mind of Christ, they should have seen the cross for what it is—the very wisdom of God—and thereby have been able to make a true judgement of the dynamic of *Christ crucified*. By pursuing honour in their veneration of high-status apostles they act like those without the Spirit who are lusting for honour and see the cross as shameful and foolishness. The net result—and the irony—is that they are "spiritual" yet "unspiritual;" they are pursuing worldly "wisdom," yet missing the very wisdom of God. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that those who trust in the wisdom of this age and heroize human leaders do not flourish, but are to be counted among the perishing. By yielding to the tyrannical 'powers' of this age (cf. 2:6) they are turning away from God, thereby alienating themselves from the true source of life. When Paul directs them to become "fools" that they may become "wise" (3:18; cf. 4:10a) he is directing them to the wisdom of the cross, rejected by this age (cf. 2:8), for this is precisely the means by which God has unmasked humanity's folly (3:20) and

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this age are the wielders of power in this world: the wise, the powerful, and those of noble birth, who find the cross incomprehensible. See Witherington 1995:127; Hays 1997:43-44; Horsley 1997:244; 1998:58.

[1] Those interpreters who have understood these rulers to be demonic powers have missed seeing the political basis and thrust of Paul's own gospel, so, Barrett 1971:70; Conzelmann 1975:61 (and see bibliography there, n. 44, 45). Carr (1976-77:20-35), Fee (1987:103-104), and Horsley (1997:244) demonstrate that there is little linguistic evidence indicating demonic powers.

yet provided for its salvation (1:21-25). Paul is urging them to reappropriate the gospel, which has the cross of shame at its core, and through which God called them to be baptized into the company of Christ—the believing community of "those who are being saved" (cf. 1:18-21).

2.4.4 1 Cor 3:5-4:5: "Boasting" in Human Leaders[1]

A central problem within the Corinthian congregation is highlighted by Paul in 3:21, μηδεὶς καυχάσθω ἐν ἀνθρώποις; it is this which has resulted in the Corinthian factionalism parodied in the "slogans" of 1:12 and 3:4.[2] Public claims to honour would have been especially common in a large competitive city like Roman Corinth, where they would have been considered a necessary part of normal life, especially if one wanted to succeed in life. Humility was seen in Greco-Roman culture not as a great virtue but as acting in a servile manner.[3] Such issues play a significant role in the understanding of 1 Corinthians, for the Corinthians' partisanship, as noted above, developed from making public honour claims both about the honour-status of their respective group-leader, and about their own wisdom, spiritual knowledge and discernment in choosing a leader with whom to adhere.[4] The superior honour of their own group-leader would also redound upon them—a further cause for self-aggrandizement.

That making a public claim to honour through particular leaders is connected to factionalism is seen in Aelius Aristides when he attempts to reconcile the people of Ephesus,

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[1] See pp. above.
[2] Other results of boasting warned of by Plutarch seem to have surfaced in Corinth, in particular envy and glory-seeking; on envy, *Mor.* 539D, 546D; cf. 1 Cor 3:3; on glory-seeking, 540D; cf. 1 Cor 4:10; 12:23. Also, Arist. *Pol.* 5.2.4; 2.4.7.
[3] LSJ *sv* (ταπεινόω and cognates), humiliation, abasement, defeat, low estate, low condition, lowly in mind.
[4] So, Munck 1959:157. Cf. B. Sanders 1981:255; Hays 1997:27.

Smyrna and Pergamum from their rivalry for titles and civic honours.[1] Ephesus and Smyrna being colonies of Athens (and thus sharing its esteemed ancestry), made claims to honour through more noble descent than Pergamum, but Aristides urges unity through a common "boast,"

> [Pergamum] can make a boast [αὐχᾶσθαι[2]] similar to Athens itself in respect to its generation of aboriginal men and heroes. But if not, then a similar boast to these cities. for its colonists are descended from aboriginal Arcadians, so that from this cause it is reasonable for you to have recognized one another as friends and to have paid each other appropriate honors. (*Or* 23.26)

Employing the same strategy to combat factional honour claims, Paul urges a sense of unity in a unified "boast" in the Lord (1:31; 3:21-23).[3] Paul's scriptural warrant is made with a paraphrase from Jer 9:22 (ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω; 1 Cor 1:31), the wider context of which is set within the shame of imminent exile and which decries those seeking honour through their own riches, wisdom, and strength (Jer 9:19, 23). But Paul also stresses the passive nature of certain possessions—they are gifts of God, not attained through merit, and therefore not to be used as a public claim to honour (1 Cor 3:21-23; cf. 1:5). Indeed, the question of honour and shame is now a question of the Corinthians' relationship to Christ, for Christ now defines what is honourable and what is shameful. Those who trust in him, although they may be ridiculed by opponents and persecutors, will ultimately receive divine honour.[4]

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[1] See MacMullen 1966:185-191 for details on these city rivalries.
[2] Like καυχάομαι, see LSJ *sv.*
[3] Cf. Pss 34:2; 44:8
[4] See Moxnes 1988a:73. Paul here applies a common OT theme about the persecuted righteous who cry to God that the godless shame them. The righteous ask God to save them, to grant them justice so that they may be saved with honour and their enemies be left with shame. Cf. Pss 9, 10, 34, 42, 43, 44, 55, 74, 80, 89, 107, 108; Isa 44:9-11; 45:24; 47:3; 61:7; 50:7; 54:4. The national cycle of idolatry/oppression (shame),

Paul urges the Corinthians to follow his and Christ's example of self-sacrificial behaviour, but he does not merely develop the OT paradox that man can only truly make suitable honour claims when he looks away from himself to God's acts. He also takes up and expands to the point of "absurdity" the rabbinic view that the believer can find suitable honour claims within his afflictions and sufferings (1 Cor 4:10ff.).[1] For Paul's public honour claims revolve around his weakness, his humiliations and his sufferings, since they are to him the surest marks of his commendation by the suffering Messiah. In this response he goes to the point of self-deprecation that both his opponents and partisans must have found deeply disturbing; but in doing so, he is well aware that the claim to honour which his apostolic activity confers on him is grounded only in what Christ does through him (1 Cor 15:10; cf. Rom 15:17f.). Yet it is clear within this paradox that Paul is saying fundamental things about the nature of his understanding of both apostolic authority and life `in Christ` generally. For Paul, apostolic authority is the authority of the gospel itself, and since the gospel is the message of the `foolishness` and `weakness` of God (1 Cor 1:18-25), the apostle, if he is such at all, must embody that same foolishness and weakness.[2] That is to say, his life and work bear the marks of the death of Christ—the physical sufferings and the social stigmata which we find enumerated in his catalogues of humiliation. This pattern is not to be confined to the apostle, though it is pre-eminently exemplified in him; rather, his congregations are to imitate him in his weakness, as he imitates Christ. Apostolic authority, the embodiment of the power of the gospel in the person of the apostle, is the power of God

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repentance/deliverance (honour) is repeatedly seen in the OT; most clearly in the book of Judges. See Hobbs 1997. Paul also used boasting of himself in 2 Corinthians, although in a mocking way to criticize its use by his opponents.

[1] In Philo, for example, it is human weakness that most effectively reduces boasting by reminding man of his proper place in relation to God. Self-knowledge also helps to do this, *Mos.* 2.96; *Spec. Leg.* 1.10-12; *Praem.* 47; Forbes 1986.

[2] Barrett 1986:367.

revealed `in weakness.` Through this, and this alone, Paul's claim to honour will be realized, for his praise shall derive from God himself (1 Cor 4:5). This is what his opponents in their arrogance have forgotten.

2.4.5 1 Cor 4:6-21: The Honoured and the Shamed

In 1 Cor 3:1-4:5 Paul speaks of Apollos, Peter and himself as servants or stewards before God. His aim is twofold, to demonstrate the redundancy of making public claims to honour through human leaders (3:21), and now in 4:6, "so that none of you will be puffed-up (φυσιοῦσθε) in favour of one against another."[1] Like "boasting," φυσιόω has the nuance of a public claim to honour, but here it is a public claim to *self-honour*.[2]

The description of the Corinthians as φυσιοῖ, one which Paul will use again (4:18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4[3]), is a caricature of the political `windbag,` the orator inflated at his success,[4] or those filled with a sense of their own power and status.[5] But it is also frequently linked to the lust for honour, an action which may lead directly to friction, antagonism and partisanship. Demosthenes writes of the hatred, anger, and quarrelling which followed the

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[1] Paul is speaking to the whole congregation at this point (3:21; 4:6; cf. 5:2), the majority of whom are `puffed-up` with regard to the higher status of their own particular group. Fee (1987:49) appears to read too much into this text when he claims, "Given...the indication in 4:6 that some are "puffed-up" *for* one (apparently Apollos in this case), *against* the other (probably Paul), it seems altogether likely that the quarrelling over their leaders is not just *for* Apollos or Cephas, but is decidedly *over against* Paul at the same time." Although such an exegesis may suit Fee's reading of the partisanship as overwhelmingly *anti-Paul*, the community boasting is decidedly *towards* "human leaders" (plural) rather than directed simply against Paul (3:21).

[2] The two terms are almost synonymous and are often used in tandem in Greek texts, see M. M. Mitchell 1991:95; Litfin 1994:168.

[3] The only remaining occurrence of φυσιόω in Pauline literature is found in Col 2:18.

[4] Plato *Alc.* 2 145e; Plut. *Cic.* 887b; Epictetus *Diss.* 2.16.10.

[5] Such as Alcibiades and Critias in Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.25; Gaius in Philo *Legat.* 86.154; 69.255; Pausanius in Dem. 59.97; 19.314 (cf. Thuc. 1.132.1-3). Dio Chrysostom claims that kings and tyrants can be `puffed-up` in their "fortunes, reputations and honours" (*Or.* 30.19; cf. 58.5), and while Philo writes glowingly of Augustus, "...there is most undeniable proof that he was never influenced or puffed-up by the excessive honours paid to him" (*Legat.* 154), he appears to assume that this is an atypical reaction.

Greek victory at the battle of Plataea when Pausanius, king of the Lacedaemonians, who had been given the supreme command of the Greek forces, set up a memorial to himself for his great achievements. Demosthenes claims that such (self-awarding) honour led to Pausanius being `puffed-up,' and resulted in his refusal to honour the other Greek forces.[1] Similarly, Plutarch notes that self-praise appears to gratify ambition and an unreasonable appetite for fame which only serves to underline a lack of status; for,

> ...when those who hunger for praise cannot find others to praise them, they give the appearance of seeking sustenance and succour for their vainglorious appetite from themselves. When they...try to rival the honor that belongs to others and set against it their own accomplishments and acts in the hope of dimming the glory of another, their conduct is not only frivolous, but envious and spiteful as well. (*Mor.* 540A-D)

Such persons are noted as possessing the quality of being "puffed-up." Indeed, Philo writes that the `puffed-up,'

> ...endeavour to bring upon others what is exactly contrary to the benefits which they have themselves received; for either, having themselves become rich, they prepare poverty for others, or having arrived at a high degree of honour and reputation, they become to others the causes of dishonour and infamy. And as the soul of such a man is blameable, so also is his body in all its position and motions, for he walks on tip-toes, and lifts his head on high, strutting and giving himself airs, and he is elated and puffed up beyond his nature, and...he treats his servants as though they were cattle, and free men as though they were his slaves, and his kinsmen as strangers, and his friends as flaterers, and citizens as foreigners; and he looks upon himself as the most wealthy, the most distinguished, the most beautiful, the strongest, the wisest, the most prudent, the most righteous, the most rational, and the most learned of all men; and then he looks upon all the rest of mankind as poor, of no reputation,

[1] Dem 59.96-98. The memorial read: "Pausanius, supreme commander of the Greeks, when he had destroyed the host of the Medes, dedicated to Phoebus this memorial" (Dem 59.97).

> dishonoured, foolish, unjust, ignorant, mere dregs of mankind, entitles to no consideration. (*De Virt.* 166, 173-174)[1]

Paul's point in 4:6-21 is that the seeking after honour, which has led to the Corinthians' partisanship, has also led to the community being puffed-up with their misplaced claims to honour over human leaders. This in turn has led directly to quarrelling and antagonism. Welborn (1987:88) makes the point, "With savage irony, Paul imprints the familiar image of self-conceit which gives rise to partisanship."[2] Paul uses the servant-like attitude of both Apollos and himself as a stark riposte to the arrogant behaviour of many in the congregation who "boast" over their spiritual gifts as personally achieved status indicators rather than appreciating them as gifts of God (4:7).

Paul's response is to mock the community for their alleged `wealth` and `kingship,` and he does so within the categories of honour and shame (4:8-10). Anthropological research of the contemporary Mediterranean littoral has demonstrated that certain sanctions are imposed to safeguard family or community interests against unlimited self-seeking behaviour. The chief of these sanctions is mockery.[3] The relation of mockery to a cultural value system and to the roles related to it is done directly through notions of shame. That is, "mockery may be said to work through shame to preserve honour."[4] The aim of mockery is to reconcile individual or small-group desires with those of the wider home-group or community, and it acts to delineate the respect of and correct behaviour towards others. In causing an individual or small-group to lose standing in the respect of the wider community, thereby making them ashamed of certain actions, mockery brings abut this identification

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[1] Cf. also *Mos.* 1.6.30.
[2] The sense of which is correct, although "self-conceit" has modern implications, and φυσιόω goes far beyond notions of self-conceit.
[3] See especially Du Boulay 1976; N. H. Taylor 1995:136.
[4] Du Boulay 1976:395.

between what are otherwise antipathetic interests. And, as here, mockery can also have the effect of causing emulation, in a positive sense, of the highest ideals of the community, and so extolling a rigorous standardization of behaviour.[1]

In contrast to the putative kingship of the Corinthians, Paul claims that he and the other apostles were "exhibited...as though sentenced to death" (4:9).[2] Such imagery is taken from the well-known practice of the Roman "triumph" in which a victorious general would parade through the streets in a chariot, with the leaders of a defeated army trailing along in the rear of the procession, to be "exhibited" and humiliated as a public "spectacle" (4:9).[3] Those at the very end of the procession ("last of all") were on their way to imprisonment or, more likely, execution (cf. 2 Cor 2:14).[4] One could hardly imagine an image more antithetical to the cultural conception of the wise, strong and honoured of Greco-Roman society. The metaphor is powerful and striking, and begins these few verses with the same sense of utter shame and humiliation with which it will conclude (v. 13).

Paul proceeds to describe the qualities of shame that are now predicated of the apostles for the sake of Christ: they are `fools,' `weak,' and `dishonoured;' in sharp contradistinction to the presumed honour values of the Corinthians (4:10).[5] But the Corinthians' honour is self-honour and worldly-honour; they are engrossed in the honour-games of their Greco-Roman neighbours and of the civic elite, and they attempt to emulate those who would watch and rejoice in the utter humiliation of a "dishonoured" army and its

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[1] As the effect of Paul's letter apparently had (2 Cor 2:1-4, 9-10; 7:4-16).
[2] The "apostles" probably includes Peter (3:22) as well as Apollos (and perhaps even the Twelve, 1 Cor 15:7).
[3] See Esler 1995:239-258.
[4] This is widely attested, e.g., the processions of Vespasian and Titus celebrating their victory over the Judean rebels in 70 CE (Jos. *War* 7.132-57; Dio Cass. 6). Such a procession may have appeared to be "spectacle to the world" (1 Cor 4:9; cf. the parallel imagery of Judean martyrology, 4 Macc 17:14, and see Horsley 1998:70ff.). Some, however, see here the imagery of those condemned to die in the amphitheatre either as gladiators or being thrown to the beasts; see Sen. *Ep.* 7.2-5; on gladiatorial contests in Corinth, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.121.
[5] Φρόνιμις, a synonym of σοφία, with perhaps greater emphasis on the "sensible" character of the "wise" person (cf. 1 Cor 10:15). It is often pejorative in Paul, as here (cf. 2 Cor 11:19; Rom 11:25; 12:16). See further BAGD 866.

leaders. Within Paul's metaphor such leaders stand for the apostles, but Paul's point is that he is unconcerned with being dishonoured before a world which has already dishonoured the Messiah; the scandal of the cross is written large over Paul's vision of his own apostleship.

In 4:11-13 Paul abandons any irony and immerses himself in a catalogue of shame: he is hungry and thirsty;[1] poorly clothed, beaten[2] and homeless; weary from the work of his hands;[3] he is reviled, persecuted, slandered;[4] he is the "rubbish of the world," the "dregs of all things." This is the "dishonour" that attends Paul's apostolic ministry in contrast to the Corinthians who consider themselves to be "filled, rich, ruling, wise, powerful, and honoured."[5] Paul's catalogue places him amongst those in his social world who are objects of shame and contempt, but he regards these as identifying marks of the authenticity of his apostleship for they manifest his conformity to Christ's sufferings. To be a follower of Christ is to share in his shame and rejection by the world.

Paul's honour-shame language continues into the final paragraph. He claims that he does not intend to put the congregation to shame in what he writes them, but this denial is a rhetorical move since he is, in fact, trying to shame them into re-evaluating their views and lifestyle.[6] His motivation is to correct their behaviour in an attitude of fatherly admonition which is found both within the Roman imperial ideology of the early principate as well as

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[1] Cf. 2 Cor 11:23-29; Rom 8:35; Phil 4:12.

[2] Lit. "to strike with the fist," cf. 2 Cor 12:7. See further Barrett 1971:111; Fee 1987:178; Schmidt *TDNT* 3.818-821.

[3] A point of contention between Paul and the Corinthians, see 9:4-8; 2 Cor 11:7-9; 12:13-17; Hock 1980; Theissen 1982; Chow 1992.

[4] The three antitheses of vv. 12b-13 anticipate the *imitatio christi* in the following paragraph and echo the teaching and example of Jesus (Lk 6:28; 23:34; cf. 1 Thess 5:15; Rom 12:14ff.).

[5] Such lists were common in antiquity: Epictetus 2.19.24; 2 Enoch 66.6; Jos. *War* 2.151-153; 2 Cor 4:8-9; 6:4-5, 8-10; 11:23-29; 12:10; cf. Rom 8:35; Heb 11:33-38. See Hodgson 1983.

[6] Paul uses the Greek ἐντρέπω here (4:14), a word that originally meant to "turn in," hence, "to hang one's head." It is used either `to make someone ashamed` (as here, cf. 2 Thess 3:14; Tit 2:8; frequently in the passive sense), or in the sense of `having regard or respect for someone` (Mt 21:37//Mk 12:6; Lk 18:2, 4). See BAGD 268.

being deeply rooted in Israel's wisdom tradition[1] It is the father's role to admonish and discipline his children in order to guide them into a life of knowledge and obedience before God.[2] Hence, the purpose of Paul's irony and rhetoric has a fatherly aim; he simply seeks to reassure the congregation that his motivation stems from a love and concern for them.

2.6 Summary

Paul concludes 1 Cor 1-4 by presenting the Corinthians with a stark choice. If they continue with their divisive "boasting," quarrelling and factionalism; with their obsession with worldly σοφία and γνῶσις; and with their resisting and undermining of his authority, Paul will be forced to administer stern discipline when he arrives in the city. Conversely, if they (i.e., the φυσιοῖ, 4:18) acknowledge his authority and desist from their "boasting" and partisanship, he will be able to come with a spirit of gentleness. The letter allows fair warning, but much will also depend on their reaction to the more specific directives that he is about to present in the rest of the letter.

Paul brings the opening section of the letter to a close. He has admonished and exhorted the congregation in numerous ways to turn from their "boasting" in human wisdom and to seek to be reunified in the service of the one God to whom they all belong (and under whom they will all ultimately be judged). It is clear in these chapters that the nucleus around which Pauline beliefs crystallized was the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. For Paul,

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[1] On the Greco-Roman context, see esp. Lassen 1991. The inference of such a context is supported by Paul's use of the παιδαγωγός in 4:15. Roman ideology made use of father-figure imagery to support social stratification and to legitimate a hierarchy of power, see Lassen 1991:134; Joubert 1995. On the Hebrew tradition, Prov 3:11-12; 13:24; 19:18; Hays 1997:73-74.

[2] The "rod" spoken of by Paul (4:21, not "whip" as the NIV), could be taken as either the "rod of correction" which the OT sages believed a father should use to drive away folly from the immature (Prov 22:15; 23:13-14), or that carried by the lectors on an assize.

the sheer paradox of the crucified Messiah becomes the paradigm for an identical paradoxical relation between life in the ἐκκλησία and the established structures of the Greco-Roman world—central to which was the seeking of honour, power and status. The result is a structural shift of a whole pattern of beliefs, so that the new and controlling paradigm of God's mode of action is firmly established in thought and praxis. But, more particularly, it is the offensive affirmation of a shamed and humiliated crucified Messiah which transcends and even violates any expectations based either on reason or on Israelite or Greco-Roman traditions.[1] True wisdom and power, Paul maintains, are not to be found in anything or anyone "the world" may esteem as wise and powerful. They have been disclosed through the cross (1:18-25) and bestowed "in Christ Jesus" (1:30).

In the chapters that follow, he will seek to build on the foundation of these opening chapters in a way that will decisively reshape the community's understanding of its identity in Christ—and, therefore, its behaviour.

[1] See Fee 1993:45.

Chapter 3

SOCIAL TENSIONS IN THE COMMUNITY: 1 CORINTHIANS 5-10

Having laid the foundation of a cross-centred world-view in chapters 1-4, a foundation which can serve only to deracinate the honour-centred world-view of the Corinthians, Paul now begins to address a number of ethical issues with this perspective in mind. Alarming reports have reached him, either through "Chloe's people" (1 Cor 1:11) or through the delegation of Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17), of certain behaviour and conduct within the Christ-movement. A close examination of chapters 5-15 suggests that he is still concerned first and foremost with the disunifying effect that this is having upon the community, and it follows that his theology of the cross set out in chs. 1-4 is in some sense pertinent to the discussion of ethical behaviour in the succeeding chapters.

In 1 Corinthians 5-6 Paul moves on to two particular issues wherein he calls upon believers to discipline those members whose attitudes and actions compromise the holiness and unity of the community. Indeed, Paul's chief concern here is less to do with the sin of individuals, than with the health and integrity of the Christ-movement as a corporate body. Those who openly sin (and Paul includes in this respect those pursuing litigation against a fellow member), are damaging the community and he urges that the group must act *corporately* to preserve its unity and identity as the sanctified people of God (1:2). In 1 Cor 7, Paul moves on to a wide-ranging discussion of marriage and relationships, and finally in 1 Cor 8-10 he tackles the complex and probably controversial issue of Christ-followers and commensality within its Greco-Roman context. In examining the cultural and textual issues surrounding these six chapters, particular attention will be paid to the nuances of honour-shame.

3.1 1 Corinthians 5

The problem facing Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 is the case of a male member of the community actively involved in a sexual relationship with his stepmother (γυναικὸς πατρός).[1] It is unclear whether the father had died or had divorced the woman,[2] but it is generally accepted by NT scholars that this was a long-term relationship, and that it was well-known about within the congregation.[3] Appalled by this relationship, Paul brands it πορνεία (sexual misconduct) "of a kind that is not found even among pagans" (5:1).[4] Within this scenario, a number of pertinent questions arise: why did Paul not hear news of the relationship sooner; if the case was as clear-cut as Paul assumes, why was no action taken against the man by the congregation; and how is the community "puffed-up" by the man's action? There are a number of possible (overlapping) suggestions which may elucidate this scenario and it is pertinent that each involves notions of honour-shame.

Firstly, John Chow and Andrew Clarke propose that the reticence of the community to take action against such disgraceful behaviour is because the man involved was a rich

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[1] The phrase γυναικὸς πατρός in the LXX refers to a stepmother (Gen 37:2; Lev 18:8, 11; 20:11; Dt 23:1; 27:20) and in Lev 18:7-8 it is distinguished from μήτηρ (Josephus makes a similar contrast, *Ant.* 3.274). Some maintain that the couple had married (Barrett 1971:22; Thiselton 2000:386), whereas others claim that it was cohabitation rather than marriage (Meeks 1983:129; Conzelmann 1975:96; Fee 1987:200; Fiorenza 1987:1174). As many scholars note, the woman was presumably not a member of the community for the disciplinary action ordered by Paul (vv. 5:2-5, 11-13) is aimed solely at the man.

[2] Since Paul does not describe the relationship as adultery, it is normally argued that the man's father was dead (or that he and the woman were divorced), see Barrett 1971:121; Conzelmann 1975:96; Fee 1987:200; G. Harris 1991:4; A. D. Clarke 1993:73 n. 3.

[3] Barrett 1971:121-122; Conzelmann 1975:96; Fee 1987:200; G. Harris 1991:1-21, esp. p. 4; Chow 1992:130-132; A. D. Clarke 1993:73; Witherington 1995:156; Thiselton 2000:386.

[4] The word πορνεία in a Greek context simply meant "prostitution" (i.e., using prostitutes and paying for sexual pleasure), but in the LXX the word was used, always pejoratively, to cover all extramarital sexual sins and aberrations. In the NT, πορνεία has a range of meanings: prostitution (1 Cor 6:13, 15, 16, 18; 10:8; Heb 11:31; Mt 21:31-32; Lk 15:30); marriage within forbidden degrees of kinship (1 Cor 5:1; Mt 5:32; 19:9; Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25); wanton behaviour, including fornication (1 Cor 5:9-11; 6:9; 7:2; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:3, 5; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:3; 1 Tim 1:10; Heb 13:4; Rev 2:14, 20, 21; 9:21; 21:8; 22:15; Mt 15:19//Mk 7:21); and as a figurative term for idolatry (Rev 14:8; 17:1-2, 4-5, 15-16; 18:3, 9; 19:2). See, BAGD 693; Barrett 1971:121; Malina 1972; Conzelmann 1975:95; Jensen 1978 (contra Malina 1972); Fee 1987:200; G. Harris 1991:3-4; Witherington 1995:156; Thiselton 2000:385.

patron.[1] As such, it was his social prestige and power which kept the members of the community silent and perhaps some of them may even have been bound to him as clients. To offend such a one could have entailed serious social consequences. Moreover, as a new movement whose legal status was still unclear, the community may have looked to the protection and benefaction of a patron who carried relatively great power in the legal or social establishment of Corinth. To some extent, therefore, he may have been above reproach. Given, too, the nature of the Roman legal system it is unlikely that one of his social lessers would have brought a charge against him; certainly not one of his clients, since to raise serious objection or to initiate enmity would have been socially and financially costly. The Roman legal system was heavily biased towards those of wealth and status. The issue, then, is that the moral effectiveness of the community is compromised by the relative honour status of the man involved.

Secondly, the allusions to the Corinthians' arrogance and "boasting" (5:2, 6) may demonstrate a slightly different perspective. As A. Y. Collins argues, such allusions, "imply that the act of *porneia* was not a deed done secretly out of weakness, but an ideological act done openly with the approval of at least an influential sector of the community."[2] The majority of the congregation may have believed that the man was to be honoured, in that his action was simply a valid expression of their newly found "freedom" in the Spirit.[3] So, too, in that they were now honoured with "divine" wisdom and knowledge (1 Cor 1:5; 3:18; 8:1-3) they believed that they were therefore free from moral law (cf. "All things are lawful for me," 6:12[4]), and hence the action of the man held little or no moral significance (1 Cor 6:13, 18b). Since the man was simply exercising his "spiritual" freedom, the community need not

[1] See section C3 above; Chow 1992:139ff.; A. D. Clarke 1993:89-107.
[2] 1980:253. The man may have been one of the "puffed-up" who discounted Paul's return (1 Cor 4:18).
[3] Barrett 1971:121-122.
[4] See further below.

judge him, but should actually have reasons to be proud of him. Barrett writes, "They were now spiritual people and what they did with their bodies was no longer significant, except in so far as it could demonstrate how completely they had transcended the old moral restrictions of conventional religious life, Judean and Greco-Roman alike."[1] Even among those who had reservations over such action there may have been none willing to dishonour a powerful patron who could provide protection and benefaction to the community, and who was demonstrating such "superlative" spirituality in his apparent transcendence of previous norms. On the contrary, perhaps as faithful clients some members in the community should even support and honour such a patron.[2] In short, these two suggestions provide different overlapping scenarios which elucidate the social context of the narrative, but there is also a wider economic dimension into which it can be suitably placed and which, again, revolves around notions of status and honour.

While classical law proscribed certain marriages and a wide variety of forms of nonmarital sex, including various forms of incest, it appears that the legal proscription of a sexual relationship or marriage between son and step-mother was unclear. It was certainly considered inappropriate, but was confusingly treated by the jurists and may even have been treated under a different law with different procedures.[3] Hence, while Cicero can describe such a marriage as a crime, and the Institutes of Gaius later codify its proscription,[4] there were cases in which punishment was withdrawn if a couple were deemed to have acted in ignorance of the law. Papinian, for example, cites a case from the second-century in which an incestuous couple were excused by the emperor because of their youth and presumed

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[1] 1971:122. Cf. Witherington 1995:152, 157; Hays 1997:82; de Vos 1998:110.
[2] Paul's urging that the man be removed ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν (5:2) may imply that the man had a central role within the community.
[3] So, Treggiari 1991:281.
[4] Cic. *Clu.* 5; Gaius *Inst.* 1.63.

innocence (their marriage being dissolved). So, too, a stepson was also discharged from any punishment after divorcing his step-mother.[1] That certain aspects of the laws of incest were in flux is also seen in 49 CE when the emperor Claudius passed a law *allowing* men to marry their brother's daughters. Indeed, Philo, while comparing the Mosaic Law to the laws of Greece and Persia, refers to marriages between step-son and step-mother in a way which suggests that they were certainly not unprecedented.[2] The legal status of extra-marital incest (if this was the case in 1 Cor 5) was even less clear.

But the couple involved in 1 Cor 5 may have been cohabiting or may have married for reasons of a financial nature as much as those of sexual attraction.[3] Under Augustus a series of laws were introduced which insisted that marriage was a duty for every man and woman.[4] Special taxes were imposed on unmarried men between the ages of twenty-five and sixty, on unmarried women between the ages of twenty and fifty, and on childless couples.[5] Limitations were also imposed on the rights of such persons to receive inheritances or legacies (e.g., a childless couple could only take half of any legacy).[6] Even divorced women and widows were affected. In order to escape the special taxes levied on unmarried women, a divorcee had to marry within eighteen months after the dissolution of her prior marriage, and a widow within two years from the death of her husband.[7] If a man married a widow,

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[1] See Treggiari 1991:38-39.
[2] *Spec.* 3.20-21.
[3] Contra Chow (1992:134f.) who underplays the sexual nature of the relationship. Certainly, the satirists tell us that there were husbands who were willing to condone their wives' acts of adultery in return for the control of their dowries (Juv. *Sat.* 6.135-141; this may be one of the reasons why Augustus made it a crime for a husband to condone his wife's adultery, Crook 1967:106), but nevertheless the primary reason for Paul's condemnation is that it was an act of *sexual* immorality. Cicero (*Clu.* 5.14-6.15), writes of the "madness of passion...the triumphal lust over modesty, wantonness over scruple" that a relationship such as this may bring.
[4] See especially, Crook 1967:104ff.; Hopkins 1974:117ff.; Garnsey/Saller 1987:130f. Under Roman law, cohabitation with intent to marry was itself considered a valid marriage, so Treggiari 1991:54-55; Chow 1992:133-134.
[5] Tac. *Ann.* 3.25; Dio Cass. 54.16.1.
[6] Gaius *Inst.* 2.286.
[7] See Treggiari 1991:235, and in general.

there was the opportunity of gaining direct access to the wife's inheritance (since it would be likely that her father was already dead by then[1]), and possibly to some material possessions of the woman's relatives.[2] Apart from making material gains, one could also marry for the *preservation* of family wealth.

Hence a couple would have numerous financial advantages in marrying or cohabiting with intent to marry: the man would receive his share of the inheritance from the estate of the deceased father;[3] he had a strong case to preserve in his house his stepmother's dowry to his father; he might have had access to the possessions of his wife's family; and he would have been exempt from the higher taxes of a single man.[4] A significant additional point, generally overlooked, would be that the second-wife of a wealthy father may well have been of comparable status and wealth to the son.[5] So, to see in the couple's actions a way of preserving or increasing family wealth may well provide a suitable explanation of why they chose to remain together despite possibly serious consequences. For the man, the gain in wealth, and hence status and honour, may well have negated any potential shame over his actions; and Paul's reference to the man as πλεονέκτης ("greedy" or "covetous,"[6] 1 Cor 5:11), may be a direct reference to this immediate situation.[7]

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[1] According to the estimation of Saller, roughly one third of brides would have lost their fathers, and three out of four married girls would outlive their father (1984:197, n. 14).
[2] Chow 1992:137, n. 3.
[3] The relationship is unlikely to have taken place before the father's death. Given that a father had tremendous power and authority over a son, it is unlikely that a son could engage in such a relationship without severe consequences (see Barrett 1971:121; Garnsey/Saller 1987:136-137). As men married late (usually in their late twenties), the average age difference between father and child was about 40 years. And because girls in the Roman empire tended to marry early (on average between nine and twelve years old), it is quite possible that the stepmother was still a young woman. Indeed, it was very common for women to marry for a second time, see Crook 1967:100; Garnsey/Saller 1987:131.
[4] Chow 1992:130-141.
[5] There is abundant documentary evidence which demonstrates the prohibition of marriage between high status citizens and those of lower ranks, see Crook 1967; Treggiari 1991; de Vos 1999:110; *OCD* 928-929. Plutarch (*Mor.* 1A-B) recommends that if a man wants his children to have advantages in life, he should avoid cohabitation with women of lesser standing.
[6] BAGD 667, "greedy for gain;" Fiore 1990:137, "competitive greed."
[7] See Chow 1992:138-139.

The very nature of the problem with which Paul engages in chapter 5, in each of its possible (overlapping) social contexts, may be suitably viewed within a framework of honour-shame. Whether the man was a patron, and/or one of a group who considered themselves the spiritual elite, and/or determined to accrue greater wealth and property (both of which would redound greater honour to the man), the pursuing of this potentially hazardous course of action, hazardous in both a legal and social sense, may have appeared worthwhile. If, as outlined in the Introduction, the lust for honour would undoubtedly have led the Greco-Roman male to endure all manner of potential hardship, then perhaps his action here was deemed worth the risk. Indeed, within the wider Greco-Roman milieu, his social peers outside of the Christ-movement may have envied him the blatant audacity to do it. So, too, if the couple's course of action became socially unacceptable, then there was always recourse to a claim of ignorance and subsequent divorce as a way of mitigating potential legal charges.[1]

3.1.1 Immorality and the Purity of the Community

While Paul asserts that the offending behaviour breaches pagan morality, it is also, more specifically, a violation of OT law,[2] and it is to OT tradition that Paul turns to legislate against the immoral man. Here, sexual intercourse with one's stepmother was regarded as incest, it was considered on a par with sexual relations with one's mother, sister, or aunt, and as such it was a heinous sin punishable by death (Lev 18:8; 20:11). More specifically, the *marriage* of a man to his stepmother was expressly prohibited (Dt 22:30). Paul's directive to

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[1] Even after the death of the husband, charges of incest could still be brought against the woman by her *paterfamilias* or other kinsmen. See Cic. *Clu.* 5.14; Conzelmann 1975:96 n. 29; Fee 1987: 200-201 n. 24; Treggiari 1991:38-39, 286; Chow 1992:132 n.2; A. D. Clarke 1993:77-78.

[2] See Barrett 1971:121; de Vos 1998:106-107; Thiselton 2000:386f; also Gen 35:22; 49:4; *m. Sanh* 7.4; *b. Sanh* 54a; Philo *Spec Leg* 3.12-21; Jos. *Ant.* 3.274; *Jub.* 33.10-17.

the Corinthians is a quotation of the purgation formula used repeatedly in Deuteronomy to prescribe the death penalty for offences which would lead the community into idolatry or flagrant impurity, "You must purge the evil from among you."[1] The formula appears in numerous contexts in Deuteronomy, some of which involve sexual immorality (Dt 22:21, 22, 24), and it is within this immediate context that we also find the command forbidding a man to "take his father's wife" (22:30). In each of these three cases the Mosaic prescription is for the immediate death of the parties concerned, and is followed by invocation of the purgation formula.

What has been generally overlooked, however, is the emphasis upon categories of honour-shame in the pertinent OT texts.[2] The significance of Lev 18:8 is that a sexual relationship between son and stepmother brings *dishonour* to the father, "Do not *dishonour* your father by having sexual relations with your mother."[3] Indeed, this emphasis is central to a substantial section of Lev 18 where the descriptive categories of "abnormal" sexual relations are made in terms of the dishonour that is brought to the innocent party, and hence to the OT community (Lev 18:1-5; 24-30).[4] Precisely the same emphasis is found both in Lev 20:11 ("If a man sleeps with his father's wife, he has *dishonoured* his father. Both the man and woman must be put to death"), and Dt 22:30 ("A man must not marry his father's wife; he must not *dishonour* his father's bed"). So, too, the sixth "curse-formula" of

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[1] The formula appears in Dt 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 24; 24:7 [LXX 24:9]; and with minor variations in Dt 13:5; 17:12; 22:22. In Paul's citation he modifies the verb to address the Corinthian situation by changing the LXX's second person singular (i.e. to Israel), to second person plural imperative. Cf. the "curse" formula and the categories of shame in *Jub.* 33.12, "Let anyone who lies with his father's wife be cursed because he has uncovered his father's shame."

[2] Rosner (1991, 1992, 1994), for example, makes no mention of honour-shame in this context.

[3] Here, as in the case of 1 Cor 5, dishonour would arise even if the father were dead (his name, reputation, and kin would be dishonoured).

[4] As noted above (pp. 64-65), in a collectivist honour-orientated society the honour or dishonour of one member spreads to the group.

Deuteronomy 27 employs the same categories: "Cursed is the man who sleeps with his father's wife, for he *dishonours* his father's bed" (27:20).[1]

The distinctive use of categories of honour-shame employed here, and elsewhere in the OT, are easily understood, for these undergird the relationship between Yahweh and Israel (as the chosen people set apart by and for Yahweh), and so delineate something of the very nature of Yahweh himself. *The* locus of superlative honour in the OT is Yahweh, for he alone is to be honoured.[2] Honour surrounds his essential attributes (his holiness and wisdom[3]), and his divinely appointed institutions (the priesthood, and the Sabbath[4]). In addition, there is also the ascription of honour to those who honour God, and for those who live in "fear of the Lord."[5] At the same time, the holiness and purity predicated of Yahweh is to be reflected in the moral behaviour of his people for the two are intimately intertwined (Lev 19:2b, "Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy"). Hence, the moral code presented to Israel is thoroughly detailed and given in peremptory tone, "You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God" (Lev 18:4; cf. 19:37), and frequently, the proscriptive nature of Israel's ethical code is simply delineated by an announcement of Yahweh's presence, "I am the Lord your God."[6]

It is clear that the man accused of sexual immorality, and those supporting him, believed that what one did with one's body privately did not necessarily have a negative impact upon one's honour or status either within society or within the ἐκκλησία. But Paul

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[1] Cf. the second curse (27:16), "Cursed is the man who dishonours his father or his mother." These same honour-shame categories are used to describe the action of the promiscuous daughter in Dt 22:21 and of Reuben in Genesis 35:22; 49:3-4. The ascribed honour of Reuben as Jacob's firstborn son (Gen 49:3) is lost through his shameful conduct, and his birthright is subsequently given to Joseph and his sons (1 Chron 5:1-2; cf. *Jub.* 33.15-17; *T. Reu.*).

[2] Ex 12:42; 20:24; Lev 10:3; Num 27:14; 1 Sam 6:5; 1 Chron 29:12; Ps 45:11; Isa 26:13; 49:5; 60:9; Jer 3:17.

[3] Num 25:11; 27:14; Prov 3:16; 3:35; 4:8.

[4] Ex 28:2, 40; Isa 58:13.

[5] 1 Sam 2:30; 1 Ki 3:13; Pss 84:11; 149:5; Prov 22:4.

[6] See Lev 19:3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 37.

insists that the community has a moral responsibility for the conduct of its members. Having categorized this offence as a violation of the Mosaic law articulated in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, Paul calls for the punishment associated therein, and he cites the Deuteronomic formula[1] as a direct command to the Christ-movement, "Drive out the wicked person from among you" (1 Cor 5:13). Just as such behaviour would have been a direct violation of God's covenant norms for OT Israel, so now, the Corinthian Christ-followers should realize that they belong to the new ἐκκλησία of God, and their behaviour should reflect that new status.[2] Paul's primary concern throughout is to safeguard the holiness and integrity of the Christ-movement as a corporate *body* and he emphasizes the community's judicial responsibility in acting to preserve its unity and identity as the sanctified people of God. Indeed, Paul's strong condemnation of this case of sexual immorality is explicitly rooted in his understanding of the "body" of the community. Sexual sins are particularly abhorrent for believers, not only because they involve a sin against one's "own body," but because the resulting "one body" created by an immoral couple clashes with the "body" brought into existence by the Holy Spirit between the believer and Christ (6:15-20).[3] What is at stake here is not simply a low view of sin, but the community itself.[4] Paul's concern for the purity of the community is reflected in his language about the holiness of the corporate group as God's temple, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (6:19; cf. 3:16-17). Brian Rosner defends this important point, arguing that the "destruction" of the σάρξ in 5:5 corresponds

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[1] Dt 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 24; 24:7.

[2] Note Paul's use of ἔθνη for those who are now *outside* the community (1 Cor 12:2, 13; 6:11; Gal 3:28; and see p.1 n. 1 above). On the OT context see Thiselton 2000:417f.

[3] See further Neyrey 1986 (following Douglas 1966), 1990:117ff.

[4] See Holmberg 1995:771. As Witherington (1995:151) points out, "only one verse deals with the person and twelve with the congregation's culpability in the matter." Paul's hyperbolic language of the "destruction of the flesh" does not envision the execution of the offender; rather, he reinterprets the OT formula to require his exclusion from the community. See further G. Harris 1991; Rosner 1991, 1992; South 1993.

conversely with the warning about attempts to "destroy" the holy temple (3:17).[1] The issue is one of *corporate responsibility*; what the individual member does is certainly not an individual matter but the responsibility of the whole community.

The imagery used by Paul to explicate this further is that of the leaven and the Passover sacrifice of Exodus 12.[2] The leaven is the symbol of that which is unclean and actively polluting; it is necessary to remove the "old" leaven from the home. For Paul, sexual immorality, like leaven, can spread and contaminate the whole community, and therefore, by the same degree, this destructive influence must be removed (5:6). But in 5:7, Paul's metaphor makes a subtle change, for it is now the people themselves who *are* the unleavened bread, and the result is that the community itself needs to be purified and prepared for the feast. The import in understanding the function of the Passover lamb at this point is essential, for this was not a sacrifice to atone for sin; rather, it symbolized the setting apart of Israel as a distinct people under God's protection—a people who would be delivered from the oppression of their cultural milieu. OT thoughts of the leaven lead inextricably to thoughts of the feast with *un*leavened bread—the Passover. In the same way, Paul's metaphor suggests that the blood of Christ marks out the Corinthians as a distinct people and that a distinguishing mark of the community should be a radical concern with holiness, purity, sincerity and truth (5:8).[3] Neyrey has adequately demonstrated that such concerns are intimately connected with honour and shame; the purity and holiness of the

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[1] Rosner 1991.

[2] See Conzelmann 1975:98; Fee 1987:217; G. Harris 1991:19; M. M. Mitchell 1991:113; Holmberg 1995:771; Witherington 1995:159. On "the Passover" see Jeremias *TDNT* 5.895-903. The mention of the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb here is the only occurrence in Paul. Christ is simply called the Passover, not the Passover lamb, cf. Witherington 1995:159, n. 23. Elsewhere it is found in 1 Pet 1:19; Jn 1:29, 36; 19:36; Rev 5:6, 9, 12; 12:11.

[3] 1 Cor 5:8 explicitly recognizes the Judean practice of throwing out the old leaven each year at Passover and replacing it with new leaven.

corporate body bring honour; the defiling and so `pollution` of the body brings a sense of dishonour (6:15-17).[1]

The Passover imagery, in this typological reading, also has an eschatological dimension for the death of Christ as the paschal lamb rescues the community from the impending wrath on the day of the Lord (1:8; leaving God to deal with unbelievers, 1 Cor 5:12-13). The immoral man is to be excluded from this eschatological community (i.e., one whose `doors` are framed by the blood of the Passover lamb); he is left outside, exposed to the coming power of the destroyer (1 Cor 5:5; cf. Ex 12:12-13). What is at stake in both cases is the precise identity of God's holy people—which is here manifested and upheld by keeping "outsiders" away. The Passover meal, after all, was the most inaccessible of meals for those not belonging to the community,[2] and the common element between the Passover and the commensality of the Christ-movement is that both are guarded by stringent demands for purity.[3]

3.1.2 Summary

Paul's primary concern in dealing with the matter of sexual immorality is the question of boundary definitions and the honour of the Christ-movement in Corinth.[4] The lust for honour (in terms of wealth, power and authority) has led this man to pursue a relationship which is `polluting` the corporate body and so bringing shame upon the community. Worse still, the social honour-based constraints of patronage and deference together with a claim to

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[1] Neyrey 1986; cf. D. Martin 1995.
[2] Cf. the analogy between Ex 12:48 and 1 Cor 5:11.
[3] See Neyrey 1986; M. M. Mitchell 1991:113; Barclay 1995.
[4] On community boundaries see bibliog. p.68 and n. 1. 1 Cor 5-6 is fixated on the boundary dimensions of the community; the reason why the boundaries are so impermeable is an issue directly related to group honour maintenance. In this context the breaching of boundaries brings dishonour.

be spiritually endowed with special wisdom and knowledge, have led most of the community to either tolerate or openly endorse such behaviour. It may also have led to difficulties for any in the community to criticize or condemn the man when he had such authority and support within the congregation. Considerations of the issue were passed over to the apostle. It may have seemed to many of the Corinthians that Paul's severe judgement on the man and his stinging criticism of the culpability of the community was an unnecessary, if not irrelevant, restriction of personal privileges.[1] But it is within the area of `lifestyle` that Paul wants to establish the distinctive characterizations of identity within the Christ-movement. As Witherington accurately perceives,

> "Paul was redefining the whole zone of honor and shame for his converts...[his] strategy in this cultural situation is to redraw the lines of honor and shame, so that male sexual behavior can produce shame...he undermines many of the most cherished values and redefines what real status amount to...For Paul it is God, not society, that can bestow real honor and dispense lasting shame. (1995:154-155)

Paul's pronouncement of the judicial verdict and judgement is made *publicly* before the whole community, bringing shame upon both the man and upon the Christ-movement. Paul hopes that the severity of the judgement upon the individual, his severe public shaming and his expulsion, might lead to sober reflection on his immoral behaviour.[2] As this was the sole ἐκκλησία in Corinth, the action would remove from him any possibility of an attempted re-integration into the community before his cessation of the relationship and suitable repentance. If he was a person of wealth and status, or particularly if he was a patron, this is a very bold move by Paul, for the shaming of one's social superior was anathema in such a

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[1] See Dunn 1998:690, and n. 80.

[2] Cf. 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Thess 2:9-10. Hays (1997:85) sees the "destruction of the flesh" (5:5) to refer to "a process of purifying him of his fleshly desires, perhaps through shaming him into repentance."

culture.[1] In addition the man would also be deprived of the respect and support of other Christ-followers.[2] As Dio Chrysostom recommends to the people of Tarsus, "When you decide that you are going to remove someone and it is thought that he is guilty of such wrongdoing that it is not beneficial to ignore it, make yourself ready to convict him and immediately behave toward him as you would toward a personal enemy and one who is plotting against you."[3]

In all of this it is the crucified Christ, here described as the Passover lamb, who lies at the heart of Paul's perspective—a perspective which he perceives is critically needed by the community. The paradigm of Christ-centred praxis is once again found in the shamed and humiliated Messiah; the Holy One who calls his people to be holy (1:2); the weak One through whom is manifested the power of God (1:17-18); and the low and despised One who puts to shame those in lustful pursuit of wisdom, strength and honour (1:26ff.). Once again it is in the paradox of Paul's gospel, the paradox of the cross of shame, where true power, and hence honour lies. Fee asserts that here, "Paul [makes] the event of the crucified One the grounds for ethical behavior. V. 7, therefore, functions as a compendium of Paul's gospel in metaphor...In the same way, on the basis of the crucifixion of Christ, God's people are to keep an ongoing feast of the celebration of God's forgiveness by holy living."[4]

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[1] See Fiore 1990:138; Hays 1997:85.
[2] So Thiselton 2000:399-400.
[3] *Or.* 34.40.
[4] 1987:215, 218.

3.2 1 Corinthians 6

The structure of 1 Cor 5-6 appears to be somewhat anomalous, with questions often raised as to how the opening section of chapter 6 (vv. 1-11) harmonizes satisfactorily with the two sections on immorality either side of it. But, as Goulder rightly reminds us, Paul makes frequent use of ABA-type patterns, and these are clearly evidenced throughout 1 Corinthians.[1] There is also one other significant point which has been generally overlooked. 1 Cor 5 concludes with Paul's invocation of the Deuteronomic purgation formula, the first occurrence of which is found in Dt 17:7, and where it is *directly followed* by a section pertaining to lawcourts (Dt 17:8-13).[2] Here, the Deuteronomic text insists that the judgement of cases arising *between* members of the community is to be made *within* the community (by a Levite or judge) and that the decisions made must be strictly adhered to (Dt 17:10-11). Anyone demonstrating contempt for such administration is to be removed from the community by being put to death (Dt 17:12-13). So, too, four of the five further citations of the purgation formula in Deuteronomy (19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 24) are in immediate collocation with passages remarking upon judicial processes, and which refer to judgements made by priests, elders or judges of a variety of cases (false witnesses, 19:18; a rebellious son, 21:19-20; and sexual immorality, 22:21; 22:24).

Of additional relevance for both the Deuteronomic text (17:7) and 1 Cor 6 are the nearby Mosaic stipulations on the appointment of judges,

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[1] Goulder 1999, esp. p. 344.

[2] Dt 17:7 (LXX) is the first of the closest linguistic parallels. Interestingly, the legal cases mentioned are of four types: bloodshed, lawsuits, assaults and ἀντιλογία (BAGD *sv*, "contradiction, dispute, hostility"—sentiments which Paul has to deal with throughout 1 Corinthians). The MT lacks ἀντιλογία. The digression of 6:1-11 may also have been precipitated by Paul's insistence upon the community *judging* the immoral man of 1 Cor 5 (see Rosner 1998:337).

> Thou shalt make for thyself judges and officers...and they shall judge the people with righteous judgement: they shall not wrest judgment, nor favour persons, nor receive a gift; for gifts blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. Thou shalt justly pursue justice, that ye may live...(Dt 16:18-20, LXX)

Much of the language here is formulated around an understanding of the honourable man—the one who is righteous, sincere, and impartial; the one who is holy as Yahweh is holy. Indeed, the honour and integrity of the appointed judges, those who would judge the people of God, are a vital element of the Deuteronomic law-code.[1] A corrupt, unrighteous judge within the communal ranks of Israel could only bring shame upon the community and so upon Yahweh himself.[2] In the same way, Paul has much to say concerning both the lack of integrity of the Greco-Roman judges before whom the Corinthians are inclined to go and the shameful behaviour of the plaintiffs (both termed the ἄδικοι, 6:1, 9). Of particular interest, too, is the descriptive category of the `wise` judge or official, whose righteous judgement is susceptible to being perverted by a bribe (Dt 16:19); a theme which is perhaps in Paul's mind as he employs, somewhat sarcastically, the notion of the Corinthians bringing disputes and cases before the `wise man` of the community (1 Cor 6:5, see further below).[3]

Hence, it is easy to envisage how Paul's use of the Deuteronomic purgation formula in 1 Cor 5:13 has led him directly into an excursus on the issue of the lawsuits taking place between believers. Equally, it is clear that within the OT texts, notions of honour and shame come clearly to the fore.[4]

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[1] Carmichael 1974; Craigie 1976:247-248.
[2] See Dt 1:16-18; 16:18-20.
[3] Rosner (1991a) explores the terminological links between 1 Cor 6:1-6 and the Mosaic appointment of judges in Dt 1 and Ex 18.
[4] See esp. Matthews/Benjamin 1996; Laniak 1998; Hagedorn 2000 and the bibliographies there.

3.2.1 Honour and Status in the Secular Lawcourts

It would appear that the pursuit of litigation in the early Empire was a rising tide, which little could stem. Meeks describes the period as a "litigious age."[1] To alleviate the administrative pressure on central courts at Rome, a great deal of minor litigation was left to local municipal courts by the governor of a province (his concern being more with matters relating to public order). This would have been no less true in the Roman colony of Corinth where minor civil actions were given to the local courts and could be tried by judges or juries.[2] But there were significant qualifications to such civil action. Children, freedmen, private citizens and men of low rank could not charge a parent, patron, magistrate, or a person of high rank, respectively.[3] Such proscriptions were in place in order to avoid (potential) insult being made to the honour of a high-status defendant, or a lack of respect being accorded to one's parents, patrons or one's social betters. The Roman legal system was anything but impartial; it was strongly biased towards the wealthy and elite since it was they who controlled it via the elected offices of the city.[4] Bribery of both the judiciary and the jury by the elite was common.[5] As Garnsey observes, "Discriminatory rules or discriminatory practices, then, protected members of the higher orders from being taken to law in some circumstances...[and] the evidence shows that a humble prosecutor might be rejected merely because of the quality of his opponent."[6]

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[1] 1983:66. By 73 CE it appears that congestion of many of the courts both in Rome and the provinces had occurred, see Tac. *Ann.* 11.5-6; Pliny *Ep.* 3.4; 2.11; 2.14; 6.8; 6.32-33; Carcopino 1941:187-189.
[2] Crook 1967:79. More recently, Bruce Winter (1994) has collected much evidence for the protocols of litigation regarding civil disputes.
[3] Justinian *Digest* 2.4.2, 4; 3.11.1; Garnsey 1970:182; Winter 1991:561; Horrell 1996:111.
[4] Epstein 1987:90-126; Chow 1992:78, 128-129; A. D. Clarke 1993:27, 62; A. C. Mitchell 1993; Horrell 1996:70.
[5] Suet. *Claud.* 15.1.
[6] 1970:187.

The injustices and discrimination suffered by the lower classes in the courts of law are well documented. The elder Seneca highlights the case of a wealthy, powerful man whose mocking of a poor man threatening to institute legal proceedings provides a suitable illustration of the power which the elite maintained in the judicial processes. "Why don't you accuse me, why don't you take me to court?" was his taunt. Seneca comments, "This rich man was powerful and influential, as not even he denies, and thought he never had anything to fear, even as a defendant." The poor man's response epitomizes the social reality of any legal redress, "Am I, a poor man, to accuse a rich man?" The rich man's final comment was to highlight the extent of his power, "What would I not be ready to do to you if you impeached me, I who saw to the death of a man who merely engaged in litigation with me?"[1] Cicero's observations perhaps sum up the problems with litigation in the secular courts in the East, for he maintained that there were three major hindrances in civil litigation: `excessive favour` (*gratia*), `possession of resources` (*potentia*), and `bribery` (*pecunia*).[2]

A further example is found in an edict of Augustus (7-6 BCE), demonstrating that legal injustices were being perpetrated by the jury-courts of Cyrene and that Roman jurors had established `certain cliques` which acted oppressively against Greeks on capital charges. The personal involvement of Augustus perhaps suggests that the problem of corruption was not confined to Cyrene.[3] Certainly, the extant texts describing the judicial processes in Corinth support this claim. Dio Chrysostom records (circa 100 CE) that there were "lawyers innumerable perverting justice," and he also refers to the numerous young men declaiming forensic pieces in the courtyard next to the Temple of Poseidon during the Isthmian games,

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[1] Sen. *Controv.* 10.1.2, 7. See also Petron. *Sat.* 14; Lee 1972:126.
[2] Cic. *Caecin.* 73.
[3] So, Winter 1991:563.

hoping to attract business.[1] A decade later Favorinus refers to the unjust judicial treatment which he has received at the hands of some of the leading Corinthian citizens.[2]

In view of such discrimination, lawsuits were generally conducted between social equals (usually of higher status), or by a plaintiff of superior social status and power against a social inferior. Going to court in the Roman empire could be a costly business—advocates could charge exorbitant fees,[3] and even in ordinary civil law-suits both parties had to pay a sum of money before the instigation of court proceedings.[4] The accuser also had to bring a proper act of accusation, a procedure which in itself was "elaborate and expensive,"[5] and to make appeal one also had to pay a deposit which would be forfeited if the case was lost.[6] Hence, wealth and social status carried considerable advantages in the courts, and the social position and character of both the plaintiff and the accused, as well as of any witnesses, were all taken into account in forming judgments. Even the severity of any penalty imposed would vary according to the social position of the accused (the punishment of slaves was generally harsher and more humiliating than that of free men). If the gravity of a given offence led to a slave being whipped, then the comparative punishment for a free man of low rank may have been the beating with rods, while for a man of high rank it was simply the denial of certain rights.[7] Garnsey maintains that the "principal criterion of legal privilege in

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[1] *Or.* 8.9.
[2] *Or.* 37.16-17. Cf. Aristid. *Or.* 46.27; A. C. Mitchell 1993.
[3] Legal fees were banned by Augustus in 17 BCE (Dio Cass. 54.18) but reinstated by Claudius in 47 CE who set a limit of 10,000 sesterces (Tac. *Ann.* 11.5-6). Although the Senate abolished them again at the start of Nero's reign, it was not long before he reintroduced them (Tac. *Ann.* 13.5; Suet. *Nero* 17).
[4] Crook 1967:75-76; Garnsey 1970:181-218; A. C. Mitchell 1993:579f.
[5] Sherwin-White 1963:1; cf. pp. 17-18. On the penalties for accusers abandoning their charges, Sherwin-White 1963:52.
[6] Tac. *Ann.* 14.28.
[7] Garnsey 1970:199-203, 209-213; Winter 1991:564-566.

the eyes of the Romans was *dignitas* or *honor* derived from power, style of life, and wealth."[1]

A. C. Mitchell (followed by D. B. Martin) maintains that because people of higher status were favoured in the legal process they were more likely to litigate against those of lower status, and less likely to litigate against one another.[2] Both conclude that the specific cases in 1 Corinthians 6 revolve around the wealthy elite taking poorer believers to court. But both ignore the fact that lawsuits between the elite were very common and were used as a means to acquire greater honour.[3] J. M. Kelly in particular, argues strongly that as well as lawsuits being brought by a powerful plaintiff against someone of lower status, they were equally prevalent between the social elite.[4] And this is a likely scenario given the game of "challenge-response" that was played out in Greco-Roman culture which required the participants to be of comparable status.[5]

The legal trials themselves were often held before a large section of the assembly or in the open forum where crowds were free to come and listen. The partisan character of the juries and the crowd, the publicity, the pleading, and the introduction of evidence, all made the courts an efficient medium of attacking the honour and integrity of one's opponent while, at the same time, attempting to defend and enhance one's own honour.[6] The aspiration to denigrate enemies was in many cases more important than to speak the truth or see justice done. Elucidating the role of Roman judicial processes, Aulus Gellius (second-century CE) writes that it was aimed at "the preservation of honour, when the dignity and

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[1] Garnsey 1970:279 (italics his). See also de Vos 1998:109 and n. 23.
[2] A. C. Mitchell 1993; D. B. Martin 1995:76-77.
[3] See, for example, A. D. Clarke 1993:62-63; Winter 1994:108.
[4] Kelly 1966:62-68.
[5] See Malina 1993:34-37; Esler 1995a:289-290; and esp. Epstein 1987 in his chapter '*Inimicitiae* and the Courts' (pp. 90-126) where he outlines litigation as a source of inimicitiae and the sufficiency of inimicitiae as a motive in prosecutions.
[6] Welborn 1987:107; cf. Schrage 1991:405; Horrell 1996:111.

prestige of the injured party must be protected, lest, if the offence is allowed to go by without punishment, he be brought into contempt and his honour be impaired."[1]

Hence, from a cursory glance at litigation at the time of Paul, there is much evidence to support the claim that the social constraints of honour and status were inextricably intertwined with the uses and abuses of the judicial processes—the very processes within which certain Christ-followers were actively participating.

3.2.2 Shame in the Community (6:1-11)

It seems certain that Paul heard of the situation outlined in 1 Cor 6:1-11 through an oral report; his response of anger and sarcasm scarcely suggests that it stems from a question put to him by the Corinthians.[2] Most commentators assume that a number of lawsuits are taking place (an assertion supported by the use of plural forms in 6:7, 8[3]), and that the cases involved are probably some form of litigation, suggested primarily by the fact that they are instigated by one person against another and are described as βιωτικά, `ordinary cases' (vv. 3-4).[4] Ἀποστέρειν (vv. 7, 8) specifies more clearly the nature of the litigation and is best understood as referring to a case of fraud involving financial or mercantile matters.[5] The precise nature of the cases is impossible to discern, although the fact that Paul immediately

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[1] *NA* 7.14.3.

[2] See Fee 1987:228 esp. n.1. Hurd (1965:74, 82) argues that Paul seems to react angrily to the oral reports and calmly to the questions raised in the Corinthians' letter.

[3] Barrett 1971:135, 139; Conzelmann 1975:104; Schrage 1991:404; Hays 1997:92; Thiselton 2000:419f. Fee (1987:228-230) demurs from this consensus and treats the report as concerning two particular men, one of whom is taking the other before the civil magistrates for allegedly defrauding him. His suggestion that in vv. 7-8 Paul "turns his attention directly to the two men involved in the litigation, but speaks to them in such a way that the entire community is also addressed," is not entirely convincing.

[4] Barrett 1971:135; Fee 1987:228-229, 241; Dunn 1995:53; Witherington 1995:164; Hays 1997:93; Thiselton 2000:427-428; BAGD 142. Philostratus (*VS* 1.25.3) uses the word to distinguish quarrels over matters of daily life which, in contrast to more serious offences, are not to be brought to court but are settled at home.

[5] Cf. Engels 1990:43-65; Philo *Spec* 1.51.278; *Virt* 19.100, 152.

goes on to set such wrongdoing in antithesis to inheriting the kingdom of God (6:9) may suggest that some of the cases were disputes over inheritance (a prominent subject of litigation under Roman law).[1] Although we can say little with certainty about the identity of the litigants, it seems likely, due to the prejudices of the Roman legal system outlined above, that the Corinthian plaintiffs would have been people of some wealth and social position (that is, they must have had property or wealth over which to be in dispute).[2] So, too, the willingness of some Corinthians to go to court probably also reflects the confidence of socially well-established persons in making full use of the judicial system.

Paul addresses the abuses within the Christ-movement with a string of barbed questions and he chides the wealthier members for taking their grievances to the public courts where cases between believers are played out *in front of* unbelievers. There is the strong likelihood that these cases were being used by Christ-followers more to *augment* their own honour-standing and reputation than to secure financial gain.[3] Indeed, the fact that the lawsuits were pursued at all is further evidence that certain members valued their standing within the civic community and not only sought to maintain it but, if possible, to augment it. Given that such cases would have involved rivalry for honour within the community itself, the legal outcome would no-doubt have exacerbated tensions and divisions within (especially as the losers would look in some way for revenge). Such court proceedings were not conducted dispassionately by the parties but with great acrimony; in fact, enmity was itself seen as sufficient cause to litigate, and manuals for rhetorical training elucidated the most effective means of *vituperatio*—how to attack the character of an opponent.[4]

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[1] So Fiorenza 1988; Chow 1992:125f.
[2] So, Theissen 1982:97; Barclay 1992:58; Chow 1992:76, 127-129; A. D. Clarke 1993:68; Witherington 1995:163.
[3] See A. D. Clarke 1993:59.
[4] See Derrett 1991:25; A. C. Mitchell 1993:577; Winter 1991:566-568.

According to Paul, such behaviour was nothing more than an attempt to magnify one's own self-importance and this could only have a further destructive effect upon the unity of a community already riven by partisanship.

Paul's point is equally forceful when he claims that the judges of Greco-Roman courts are ἄδικοι (v. 1), highlighting, no doubt, the points articulated above, that the appointed judge and juries were notoriously partial and corrupt. He employs several sarcastic rhetorical questions, not detailed arguments, to express himself. Especially pointed, in view of their claims about being wise, is the question (v. 6) whether there is not one σοφός within the community who could judge the matter—an ironic plea, which may be a further indication that the plaintiff numbered himself among the minority "wise," which probably means also those of higher social status.[1]

The term employed by Paul to describe all of the above is simple and unambiguous: it is ἐντροπή, shaming (v. 5).[2] As certain Christ-followers take "family" disputes before the secular authorities they thereby bring the whole community into disrepute. The brother who loses the case is dishonoured and the legal corollary—the award of financial damages against him—is interpreted by Paul as the defrauding of *one's brother* (6:7-8). Paul insists that this must cease, and, if necessary, the Corinthians should appoint for themselves judges

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[1] So Theissen 1982:97. The ἐξουθενοι, "those least esteemed by the church" (6:4), may refer to either secular magistrates (so Barrett 1971:137; Conzelmann 1975:105; Fee 1987:236; Witherington 1995:165; Hays 1997:94), or an exhortation to appoint as judges even those of low esteem in the community (so Winter 1991:570; A. D. Clarke 1993:70; Kinman 1997). Either way it is an equally defiant reversal of the honour-based social values of the wider society. (The latter scenario in particular would have been a devastating prospect to those higher-status litigants lusting after greater honour through the secular courts. For not only would these new "judges" be appointed from the ranks of the slaves, but the outcome of any internal `trial` would have been far from certain; this of course is the point of Paul's sarcasm.)

[2] See 1 Cor 15:34; BAGD 269-270. Note its use in Ps 34:26 LXX where the Psalmist employs the categories of shame to denigrate those who are against him.

to settle internal disputes.[1] 1 Cor 6:1-8 as a whole is a scathing indictment of the Corinthians' inability to understand the seriousness of the offence committed, for to openly parade status and power was a parody of the gospel and must be abjured by the community.

But there are additional dimensions, for the Christ-movement shames itself by not understanding itself either as an end-time community ("Do you not know that we are to judge angels?"), or as a community redeemed by Christ. The demand for a different style of life among the Corinthian congregation must be accompanied by a fresh awareness of its own character as a "washed, sanctified, and justified" people (6:11). As noted above, this letter would be read before the whole congregation and would entail a humiliating public shaming for certain individuals. Indeed, Paul's rhetoric is designed to shame the community into a reappraisal of their current moral condition and to shame specific individuals regarding their unwarranted lust for honour.

3.2.3 Sexual Immorality and Boundary Definitions (6:12-20)

In 6:12-20 it appears that some of the Corinthian men in the community were using prostitutes and even asserting that such conduct was harmless. Prostitution was, after all, not only legal but widely accepted in the ancient world, and it is likely that many neophyte Christ-followers were simply attempting to retain a traditional cultural norm of frequenting prostitutes and courtesans.[2] Paul, naturally, is vehemently opposed to any such practice. He

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[1] This would be in accordance with OT traditions (Dt 1:9-17; 16:18-20) and the normal practice of Judean communities in the Diaspora, which established their own court systems and which sought to avoid pagan courts, see Jos. *Ant.* 10.17 (235); Schürer 3.21, 119-120, 124-125.

[2] Treggiari 1991:264; Witherington 1995:157; *OCD* 1264. To sleep with a prostitute was, apparently, natural enough for a young man in Corinth. Judeans admitted that a bachelor who remained chaste in a great city must be an outstandingly pious man (*b. Pesah.* 113a). Philo (*Joseph* 42-43) writes that pagan males frequented prostitutes from the age of fourteen.

claims that anyone who has sexual intercourse with a prostitute is guilty of defiling his own body, which now belongs to Christ (v. 15), in that it creates an unholy bond between himself and a sinful pagan world.[1] The crux for Paul is this, "The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (6:13). The body of every Christ-follower is to be treated with reverence and honour, suitably in fitting with its designation as a member of Christ and as a temple of the Holy Spirit. It is not to be used shamelessly in fornication with a prostitute.[2]

The apostle's central paraenetic injunction to such a scenario is found in 6:18, "Flee from sexual immorality!" This command recalls the fleeing of Joseph from Potiphar's wife in Gen 39/*T. Jos.*,[3] and is found verbatim in the *Testament of Reuben* (5:5; which refers to the Genesis text).[4] Paul's injunction may allude to both texts;[5] indeed, the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife would serve Paul particularly well as an example of the resolute pursuit of honour before the Lord in the face of enticing sexual licentiousness. The Genesis narrative remarks that Joseph prospered and had success in everything because "the Lord was with him" (Gen 39:2, 3). Certainly, the divine favour of Joseph was, it seems, obvious to all (39:5-6) and he was subsequently privileged with being granted the accolade of the "greatest" in Potiphar's house under the master himself (39:9). The measure of Joseph's honour-standing was without doubt, he was ascribed superlative honour from both Yahweh and from within the social hierarchy of his cultural milieu.

The testing of Joseph's honour derives from the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife, which are well documented in the Genesis narrative (and greatly expanded in *T. Jos.* 1-9).

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[1] See Murphy-O'Connor 1978; Byrne 1983; Neyrey 1990:118ff. Fisk 1996:541; Goulder 1999:345.
[2] Paul grounds his prohibition of sexual immorality in three distinct but closely related arguments relating respectively to Christ-violation (v. 15), body-violation (v. 16), and Spirit-violation (v. 19).
[3] So, Bruce 1971:65.
[4] The pseudepigraphal texts are dated from the Maccabean period (*OTP* 778).
[5] So, Rosner 1992a.

The response of Joseph is unambiguous, and is made solely with reference to his relationship with Yahweh, "How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (Gen 39:9). The honour he had found in the eyes of God, and his personal benefit that accrued from it, would be lost and the relationship fractured if he were to sin by having a sexual relationship with Potiphar's wife. However, Joseph's integrity before God also results in his social disgrace, for the scheming of Potiphar's wife leads to him being denounced by the master and peremptorily imprisoned (39:19-20). But, even here, "the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favour in the eyes of the prison warder" (39:21, NIV). The narrative goes on to describe the divine reversal of cultural fortunes—the shame of Joseph's long imprisonment being transformed into exaltation and honour under Pharaoh (Gen 40-41). The moral of the narrative would certainly be particularly relevant for those Corinthians who frequented the prostitutes of first-century Corinth, for their current behaviour was certainly bringing shame upon the community and upon God.[1]

In each of the pseudepigraphal texts mentioned above the emphases of honour and shame are prominent. Indeed, the *Testament of Joseph* begins with an extensive honour-shame catalogue of Joseph's dishonourable treatment at the hands of a variety of persecutors and the divine accreditation of honour by Yahweh,

> These, my brothers, hated me but the Lord loved me.
> They wanted to kill me, but the God of my fathers preserved me.
> Into a cistern they lowered me; the Most High raised me up.
> They sold me into slavery; the Lord of all set me free.
> I was taken into captivity; the strength of his hand came to my aid.
> I was overtaken by hunger; the Lord himself fed me generously.

[1] The one who flees immorality preserves the holiness of the body through which honour is given to God (6:17-20; δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν, v. 20). Conversely, the immoral man sins against his own body and, presumably, brings shame to both God and the community.

> I was alone, and God came to help me.
> I was in weakness, and the Lord showed his concern for me.
> I was in prison, and the Savior acted graciously in my behalf.
> I was in bonds, and he loosed me;
> falsely accused, and he testified in my behalf.
> Assaulted by bitter words of the Egyptians, and he rescued me.
> A slave, and he exalted me. (*T. Jos.* 1)

The final line of poetry is of particular interest as Paul will go on to use the imagery of the slave market, in 6:20. Here, as noted above, the shame of Joseph's slavery is transformed by God into one of illustrious honour.

The text also goes on to describe the sexually immoral wife of Potiphar in language which designates her as shameful. She is "a shameless woman" (*T. Jos.* 2.1), and full of "deceit and...deviousness" in her attempt to lure Joseph into a sexual relationship (3.8-9). She is also full of "treachery" (4.4) and "wickedness" (5.2; 6.6)—an unclean adulterer (4.6) "consumed with jealousy" (4.7). Joseph's aim is actually to "shame" her into repentance (6.6). In stark contrast, Joseph is "approved" by God (2.7), praised and honoured for his self-control (4.1, 2; 9.3; 10.2, 3) and accredited for not being "puffed-up" in his thoughts (10.5).[1] Finally, Joseph's concluding remarks upon the whole saga of his brotherly betrayal and time in Egypt are twofold, both of which are linked to the concept of honour. Firstly, he claims that despite the sexual advances made by Potiphar's wife, his striving for self-control and his desire to bring honour (δόξα) to Yahweh were acknowledged by God and resulted in the accruing of divine honour (9.3). Secondly, with reference to his brothers, whom he refused to "disgrace" by revealing the full extent of their shameful behaviour (11.2), Joseph urges upon the reader the obedience to Torah, "...in every act keep the fear of God before

[1] Cf. the comments of Philo (*Joseph* 46) on the "honourable service" of Joseph towards Potiphar.

your eyes and honor your brothers. For everyone who does the Law of the Lord will be loved by him" (11.1). Here, Joseph's thoughts and actions are fully in accord with the social constraints of an honour-shame culture wherein the honour of one's parents, family, and family name (and with it the honour of one's God), are paramount and are to be safeguarded at all costs. The shame of his brothers' behaviour simply serves to highlight the antithesis within the narrative—that Joseph's honour and integrity before God are greatly rewarded, and not only in an abstract way but in a culturally honouring way, for he is accorded many of the supreme accolades of Egyptian culture.

Likewise, in the *Testament of Reuben*, the notion of honour-shame is central to the entire text. Indeed, in vividly narrating the "disgraceful act" (4.2, 7) of sleeping with his father's concubine, Reuben uses the sordid tale to issue a stark warning to his brothers and children against the consequences of sexual immorality (1.6). His offensive act brought disgrace to his father, his family, and to his God, and the divine response (a response of divine anger, 4.4) was to strike Reuben with a severe wound in the loins from which he would have died were it not for the intercessory prayer of his father (1.7-8). Reuben describes his transgression as an "evil" and "impious" deed (1.8; 2.14), a "lawless" and "revolting" act (2.11-12). "Never had anything like it been done in Israel" (1.10). He rues his inability to "live in integrity of heart in the fear of the Lord" (4.1) and declares,

> ...the sin of promiscuity is the pitfall of life, separating man from God and leading on towards idolatry...For promiscuity has destroyed many. Whether a man is old, well born, rich, or poor, he brings on himself disgrace among mankind and provides Beliar[1] with an opportunity to cause him to stumble. (*T. Reub.* 4.6-7)

[1] Beliar is the prince of the demonic powers (2 Cor 6:15; cf. Belial, CD 4.13; *Jub.* 1.20).

Reuben turns to the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife (4.8-11), and claims that Joseph's purity of mind and rejection of evil desires, not only protected him from "all promiscuity" (4.9) but found favour before God who "rescued him from every visible and hidden death" (4.10). In doing so, Joseph was protected from the forces of Beliar (4.11). It is in this context that Reuben urges his hearers to, "flee from sexual promiscuity" (5.5; cf. 6.1); from those who bring "an eternal disgrace" (6.3). At the same time, for Reuben, the sin of promiscuity is the "pitfall of life" for it causes separation of man from God, and so leads on towards idolatry (4.6).

The twin narratives of Joseph and Reuben provide Paul with a rich and vivid framework within which to castigate the Corinthians' sexual immorality. Certainly, Paul's imperatival dictum of 1 Cor 6:18 perhaps draws from the honour-shame scenarios outlined in both narratives for these provide two poles of a mutually exclusive Christ-centred ethic. On the one hand, the Joseph narrative stands as a paradigm for believers of righteous behaviour in the face of the cultural "norm" of openly available sexual activity. On the other, the lament of Reuben echoes down the centuries remarking upon the severe consequences of uninhibited sexual lust. And for each there is a measured divine reaction. Joseph's integrity leads to unimaginable honour, while Reuben's shame leads to divine wrath and the consequences of fractured relationships.[1] The scenarios are ideal for Paul's purposes. The Corinthians' sexual immorality constitutes a sin against both Christ and the Holy Spirit, and a fracturing of relationships; actions which may well be prompting the

[1] Cf. *T. Reub.* 4.2f.: "For until my father's death I never had the courage to look him in the face or speak to any of my brothers because of my disgraceful act. Even until now my conscience harasses me because of my impious act."

wrath of God upon the community.[1] Conversely, the honouring of God in the respecting of one's own body as his temple may well bring forth divine and cultural honour analogous to that experienced by Joseph. It certainly brings forth the superlative reward of inheriting the kingdom of heaven (6:9-11). So, too, as Reuben recognizes that sexual promiscuity serves to separate man from God, now Paul recognizes that the same act causes separation of man from Christ (6:15). For each, too, there is the dishonouring of God's holy place. In the time of Reuben the locus of God's holiness was among his chosen people, now it is to be found within the Christ-follower, in the temple of the body—the dwelling place of God's Spirit among his newly constituted people.[2]

Such thoughts are also evident in Paul's closing verse of the chapter, ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς; "therefore glorify God in your body" (6:20). The genitive may be translated *bought for a price*, (D. B. Martin 1990:63), or *bought at a price* (REB, NIV, NJB), as well as *with a price* (NRSV, AV/KJV). The imagery of the slave market appears to be clear.[3] D. B. Martin maintains here that the transaction enacts not simply freedom but a *change of ownership*, "*Agorazein* refers...to the ordinary sale of a slave by one owner to another...When Christ buys a person, the salvific element of the metaphor is...to a higher level of slavery (as the slave of Christ)."[4] Paul's imagery stresses two significant points, new ownership, and the costly price paid by the new owner as part of the transaction. But the "price" paid also firmly indicates that the cross of Christ is in view. Paul's use of the same metaphor elsewhere (Gal 3:13; 4:5) and its occurrence in the book of Revelation (5:9; 14:3,

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[1] Cf. 1 Cor 11:29-32. As Paul maintains that the body of the believer is now wholly immersed within the body of Christ (1 Cor 6:15), the lack of discernment given to Christ's body in 1 Cor 11:29 fully equates with that applied to the believer's own body in 6:13b-19.

[2] In this context, note 1 Thess 4:3-5, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God." Cf. Eph 5:3.

[3] So, Conzelmann 1975:113; Fee 1987:26; 1993:50; Hays 1997:106 Thiselton 2000:476-479.

[4] 1990:63 (italics his).

particularly in the liturgical passage of Rev 5:9), all point to the metaphor being realized in the price paid by Christ upon the cross in order to "purchase" the believer on behalf of God.[1]

Paul's point is that Christ's death, the shameful death on a cross, was the costly price paid by which the Corinthians were granted the honour of being reconciled to God and receiving the indwelling Holy Spirit. *Therefore*, Paul appears to stress, the indwelling Spirit indicates that the believer's body is now God's rightful possession and it is to stand as a holy temple to the Lord.[2] It is not now the believer's own, but belongs to God, who purchased it through the redemptive work of Christ. In short, "The body...is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (6:13). The body must now be made as a chaste temple, a place where God is to be *honoured* (δοξάζω, 6:20). It is not to be used for illicit sexual intercourse—for that is to shame God's temple, and so God himself.[3]

3.2.4 Summary

In 1 Corinthians 6, as in 1 Cor 5, Paul argues that by taking internal disputes to the Greco-Roman courts there is a concomitant violation of the believing community and its witness. In effect, there has been a serious breach of community boundaries and a deplorable witness before the wider civic community and the pagan world. The Christ-movement, as a community of honour in Christ, is being shamed both by those who would pursue litigation against fellow members in pursuit of cultural status and honour, and by those who attempt to maintain their civic "rights" or "norms" in acts of sexual immorality with prostitutes. In both cases the community of faith, and Christ himself, is being dishonoured. And both cases

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[1] See Field *NIDNTT* 1.267-268.
[2] Paul frequently employs temple imagery for the community as a whole (1 Cor 3:16-17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19-22; cf. Rom 8:11), but here he dramatically transfers this metaphor to the individual.
[3] See Joh. Schneider *TDNT* VIII 1972:178.

illustrate the Corinthians' confusion and misunderstanding over the dividing lines between insiders and outsiders. In terms of lawsuits, the apostle expects the community to find a mechanism from within the community to settle problems when they arise. Indeed, their actions demonstrate that they attempting to retain their previous concepts of community allegiances; they have not yet fully recognized that their identity as a radical *community* of believers should now be their primary frame of social and even civil reference. For when they take one another to court, they are declaring primary allegiance to the pagan culture of Corinth rather than to the community of faith. Likewise, the sexual immorality of some in the community dishonours the corporate body of the community as a temple of God.

Paul recognizes that both actions break down the boundaries of purity and holiness within the community and damages and undermines corporate unity. In both chapters of the letter the problem is the same, it is "a failure of the church to be the church."[1]

[1] Fee 1987:230.

3.3 1 Corinthians 7

For reasons of space this section will focus upon only two parts of 1 Cor 7, vv. 1-7 and vv. 17-24. Because both are reasonably substantial, and because Paul's thoughts and lines of argument are tightly argued and interwoven throughout the chapter, much of what is argued here will be relevant for the chapter as a whole. The section of vv. 17-24, in particular, is generally considered to elucidate the crux of Paul's thought on status and calling, and so the exegesis of these verses will be relevant for much of his thinking elsewhere in the chapter.

3.3.1 1 Corinthians 7:1-7

Honour and Sexual Purity

Marriage in the Roman empire was, for many, as much a useful means of enhancing one's property and status as a necessary social prerequisite for propagating the race and establishing a legitimate heir (hopefully male).[1] Roman marriage, it seems, had little to do with love or affection, for the relationship itself was unlike that in contemporary Western culture and was perhaps more comparable to that between a father and daughter or uncle and niece.[2] The primary reason for this was that a husband was often considerably older than his wife; in Roman society a girl was married at around twelve years old, whereas the man was typically in his late twenties or early thirties.[3] It was, in any case, rarely a lifelong relationship for life expectancy for women was very low (on average twenty-five years), and

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[1] On marriage, Crook 1967; Garnsey/Saller 1987:127-138, 145-147; Treggiari 1991; Peterman 1999; *OCD* 927-929.

[2] See Garnsey/Saller 1987:130ff.; Seneca (*Adv Iovin* 1.49) writes that "nothing is more shameful than to love your wife as if she was your mistress." There were obviously exceptions, see Cic. *Fam.* 14.1.3, 14.4.1; Lucr. 3.896; Pliny *Ep.* 4.19; 12.8-10.

[3] On female age, *OCD* 928; on male age, Garnsey/Saller 1987:131, 138.

one-in-five pregnancies were fatal for women.[1] Hence, a cardinal characteristic of a good Roman marriage was simply *concordia*, a state of peace or harmony; for what was most critical in the Roman hierarchy of social values was the public image of the marriage. Tacitus, for example, intimates that for a number of his acquaintances the defining character of a good marriage was that it was "a source of social distinction and an aid to advancement."[2] Such an attitude, deriving from a singularly male perspective, comports with what we have noted earlier about public honour being a necessary and vital aspect of the male ideology of the culture.

But beyond the facade of a respectable marriage was the well documented profusion of sexual immorality which existed throughout the Empire, and throughout the various social strata within it.[3] For men, extra-marital sex was quite typical (within reason), and although sexual fidelity may have been expected of a woman (and which was held as a sign of male honour),[4] the significant social changes in the late Republic and early principate led to greater sexual emancipation for women which, in turn, led to a rise in female promiscuity.[5] There is much evidence that divorce in the Julio-Claudian period and in the time of Nero was widespread and readily enacted (from both sides), for a wide range of

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[1] See further Garnsey/Saller 1987:138f.

[2] *Agr.* 6.1.

[3] The attempts by Augustine to restrain the marital dissolution of the rich with a series of sweeping laws on marriage and divorce, was also designed to substantially enrich the moral fabric of society as a whole (see Suet. *Aug.* 34). On the laws of Augustus, see esp. Crook 1967; Garnsey 1970; O'Rourke 1972; Benko 1972 (and see in general Benko/O'Rourke 1972). On sexual immorality throughout the social strata, Amm. Mar. 28.4.6-17; 14.6.7-17; on moral lapses of the elite, Garnsey 1970.

[4] McGinn 1998:153.

[5] See Balsdon 1960:30; Fantham 1994:280-293. Seneca, who describes unchasitity as "the greatest evil of our time," claimed that the chastity of his wife made her almost unique in the period and that she was regarded as old-fashioned by her contemporaries (*Helv.* 16.3; 19.2). Juvenal's summation of the typical `Roman wife` is damning, "...she never gives her husband a thought. She lives with him as if she were only a neighbour" (*Sat.* 6.508-509). And he sympathizes with a dinner guest over the anxieties caused by his wife, who "is wont to go forth at dawn and to come home at night with her flimsy dress damp and suspiciously creased, her hair in a mess, and her face and ears flushed with excitement" (*Sat.* 11.185-189, Oxford).

reasons including social aspiration and personal taste.[1] As K. C. Hanson affirms, "...divorce among the Romans was common, and they had no expectation of marriage being a lifelong arrangement."[2] Typically, then, Roman marriage existed within an ideological framework of male superiority and domination; a paternalism perhaps inherent in an age difference which "must have encouraged a psychological subordination of wife to husband."[3] And, naturally, of prime concern to the man was that a marriage should enhance his own honour and advancement—his compatibility with his wife, or her happiness, were secondary considerations.[4] In short, the husband dominated and used the marriage for his own benefit, for his own social advancement, and for his own honour.

At the same time there was an undercurrent of views in the first-century CE which centred upon the Epicurean doctrine of the undesirability or harmful nature of sexual intercourse,[5] and such views were even being propounded by contemporary medical writers. While some of these went as far as to claim that sex or the desire for sex made the body ill, it appears that *most* agreed that sexual intercourse should be limited and controlled—too much sex was considered harmful and so self-control was deemed essential. The physician Soranus (98-138 CE) maintained that total abstinence was the ideal,[6] while Rufus (first-century CE) and Galen (second century) were among the physicians who postulated that *moderate* sexual activity, suitably controlled, may not unduly *harm* the normal body. They

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[1] Tac. *Agr.* 6.1. In general, Crook 1967:106. On divorce, see Carcopino 1941:95-100 (who claims, p. 97: "...the disease tended to become endemic under the empire."); Crook 1967; Justin *Apol.* II.2. On adultery in general, Mart. *Ep.* 1.34, 35; 12.58; Garnsey 1970:41; O'Rourke 1972:182; *OCD* 14-15. The new Augustan laws appear to have made little impact on adultery nor, indeed, on the divorce rate (so, Carcopino 1941:92ff.). The proliferation of adultery from the period of the late Republic, certainly amongst the upper-classes (so, Dio Cass. 67.12.1-2.), can be linked to the profusion and accessibility of slaves, many of whom were purchased for the purpose of sex. Balsdon (1979:80) notes that young attractive boys were bought for homosexual sex, girls and women for the role of prostitutes in brothels.

[2] 1989a:148.

[3] So, Garnsey/Saller 1987:131.

[4] So, Pliny *Ep.* 6.26.

[5] See D. B. Martin 1995:200ff.; Peterman 1999.

[6] *Gynecology* 1.7.30; cf. 3.12.

also cautioned against total abstinence too suddenly and without adequate training. Dale Martin writes: "...throughout the literate culture of Greco-Roman society, and doubtless among other social strata to some extent as well, sex was taken to be an arena of the battle between strength and weakness. Sex had to be controlled and manipulated, or avoided completely, if one was to maintain a strong, healthy body, free from disease, dissipation, and weakness."[1] As a result, some men, especially in the upper classes, came to view intercourse (even with their own wives) as unhealthy, and so made the decision to live a life of abstinence.

The Stoic and Cynic philosophical schools added to this debate.[2] They argued over whether a philosopher should marry or whether the unmarried state was more conducive to the pursuit of wisdom. After all, in Greek popular religion, virginity and sexual purity were often associated with those set aside for the service of the gods—the priestess of the oracle at Delphi, for example. This intra Stoic-Cynic debate became a forum for defining an individual's allegiance to a higher cause and centred upon whether the responsibilities of married life were compatible with the pursuit of philosophy.[3] Epictetus had recognized that certain conditions made it impossible for a man to marry and at the same time meet his moral obligations to nature and the gods.[4] He envisioned some men were destined for a special "divine mission,"[5] and argued that the Cynic must keep himself "free from

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[1] D. B. Martin 1995:205. Artemidorus (late second-century CE) wrote of an athlete: "...he dreamed that he cut off his genitals, bound his head and was crowned [as a victor]...As long as he remained a virgin, his athletic career was brilliant and distinguished. But once he began to have sexual intercourse, he ended his career ingloriously" (*Oeirocritica* 5.95, quoted in P. Brown 1988:19).

[2] See especially, D. B. Martin 1995; Deming 1996.

[3] Seneca frequently comments on the philosopher's need for free time, maintaining that other aspects of life should be allotted to whatever time is left over from the pursuit of philosophy, not the other way around. See Sen. *Ep.* 72.3-4; 53.9; cf. 64.6; *De brev. vit.* 3.2; 7.2; 14.2.

[4] *Diss* 4.5.6.

[5] *Diss* 3.22.67-82.

distraction" and "wholly devoted to the service of God."[1] Can there be any free time (σχολή, cf. 1 Cor 7:5) the Cynic asks, for the man tied down to his own wife, children, and household affairs? While such things may be "fitting" for the common man, the Cynic's task involved more important issues.[2] The special "divine" dispensation of the Cynic was all part of his superior status and honour which elevated him above-and-beyond that of the common man—only the true Cynic could be the free, wise, noble, royal man.[3] The one seeking such status, seeking to attain the pinnacle of hierarchy, must "utterly wipe out desire" and forgo sexual activity entirely, thus demonstrating his complete self-mastery—the control of his body—and with it his absolute freedom and virtue.[4]

In the first-century CE, even the Judeans, who historically had celebrated procreation as the duty of everyone, had 'ascetic'[5] movements such as the Essenes and the Therapeutae. Brian Rosner asserts, "...the widespread attestation of such [ascetic] teaching in almost every corner of Judaism undermines the tendency to label it exceptional."[6] Philo presents some examples. His descriptive comments upon the Therapeutae parallel much of what was said of the Cynics.[7] He remarks that they devote their entire day to philosophical studies, and that they consider the contemplative part of philosophy to be the "best and most godlike."[8] To accommodate this lifestyle they abandon all responsibilities related to

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[1] *Diss* 3.22.69. See D. B. Martin 1995:203; Gundry-Volf 1996:532.
[2] Cf. Seneca *De otio* 4.1-2; 6.4-5; Epictetus *Diss* 3.22.1-8, 77-82, 54, 96.
[3] *Diss* 3.22.67-70. Deming (1995:54) writes, "They often framed this question in terms of what the wise man would do, since the *sophos*, acting on the basis of an absolutely good disposition, was seen as the model for human behavior."
[4] *Diss* 3.22.13. Richard Hays rightly reminds us that "Difficult as it may be for many at the end of the twentieth century to appreciate, sexual abstinence was widely viewed as a means to personal wholeness and religious power" (1997:114).
[5] On defining Judean 'asceticism,' Rosner 1994:153.
[6] 1994:155. On asceticism and Paul's OT inheritance see Rosner 1994:153-158; J. H. Elliot 2002.
[7] The life and customs of the Therapeutae are treated in Philo *Contempl.*; see also Schürer 2.591-597; Barclay 1995:118-119; J. H. Elliot 2002:4.
[8] Philo *De vita contemp* 2.11; 3.24; 8.67; 11.90. As with the Essenes, Philo states several times that they are *philosophers*, e.g. 3.21, 22, 26, 28, 30.

marriage and the household, believing that concern for the necessities of life and managing property are at odds with philosophy.[1] Their aim is the "perfection of virtue,"[2] a desire for an "immortal and blessed existence,"[3] and the appropriate honouring of God.[4]

Likewise, the Essenes,[5] according to Philo, are philosophers who pursue holiness and purity through a communal lifestyle which is the "clearest proof of a perfected and abundantly happy life."[6] What makes this possible, Philo explains, is freedom from the passions and from sensual desire (which he calls "the only true and real freedom"[7]). Consequently, the Essenes shun marriage, believing that when a man marries he becomes "a slave in place of a freedman."[8] Philo writes that the community is accorded great honour through their "exceeding holiness,"[9]

> This now is the enviable system of life of these Essenes, so that not only private individuals but even mighty kings, admiring the men, venerate their sect, and increase their dignity and majesty in a still higher degree by their approbation and by the honours which they confer on them. (*Hypoth.* 11.18)

Philo also presents some of the renowned biblical patriarchs (e.g. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Moses) as ascetics.[10] The greatest of these was Moses, whose abstinence stemmed from his desire to honour God. Philo writes,

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[1] *Contempl.* 2.18; 8.68.
[2] *Contempl.* 9.71.
[3] *Contempl.* 2.13.
[4] *Contempl.* 10.80; 11.84.
[5] See Philo *Prob.* 75-91; *Hypoth.* 11.1-18; Schürer 2.555-574, 583-590; Rosner 1994:155; Deming 1995:92-94; J. H. Elliot 2002:4.
[6] *Prob.* 91. On the pursuit of holiness and purity, *Prob.* 75, 83; *Hypoth.* 11.1.
[7] *Hypoth.* 11.14; *Prob.* 76-9, 88, 91.
[8] *Hypoth.* 11.2, 17.
[9] *Hypoth.* 11.1.
[10] See Rosner 1994:155-157.

> Therefore he [Moses], with a few other men, was dear to God and devoted to God, being inspired by heavenly love, and honouring the Father of the universe above all things, and being in return honoured by him in a particular manner, and it was an honour well adapted to the wise man to be allowed to serve the true and living God. Now the priesthood has for its duty the service of God. Of this honour, then, Moses was thought worthy, than which there is no greater honour in the whole world, being instructed by the sacred oracles of God in everything that related to the sacred offices and ministrations. But, in the first place, before assuming that office, it was necessary for him to purify not only his soul but also his body, so that it should be connected with and defiled by no passion, but should be pure from everything which is of a mortal nature, from all meat and drink, and from all connection with women. And this last thing, indeed, he had despised for a long time, and almost from the first moment that he began to prophesy and to feel a divine inspiration, thinking that it was proper that he should at all times be ready to give his whole attention to the commands of God. (*Mos.* 2.67-69; ET, Yonge[1])

Sexual Relations in Corinth

The dynamics of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 7 appear to engage with some of the philosophical attitudes towards sexuality outlined above.[2] Indeed, as Corinth was well situated be a centre of philosophical thought in the Roman world, the likelihood of Paul finding an audience at Corinth attuned to a variety of philosophical arguments about marriage was only to be expected.[3] Under the influence of the cultural forces that associated holiness and wisdom with celibacy it should not be surprising that within the Corinthian community some (or many) had decided that ordinary married life was incompatible with their new spiritual identity in Christ, and that these were advocating a call to asceticism. It is also to be expected that it was primarily the *men* in the community who were urging the

[1] Cf. Ex 19:10, 15, where the abstention from sexual relations is a prerequisite for the people of Israel as they prepare to meet Yahweh.
[2] On the Stoic/Cynic context, Balch 1983; Deming 1995 (esp. pp. 108-109); Engberg-Pedersen 2000; on the Judean context, Rosner 1994. See also Theissen 1981:39-47; Malherbe 1989.
[3] Paul encountered Stoics and Epicureans in nearby Athens (Acts 17:18; Haenchen 1971:517).

renunciation of sexual relations,[1] and this would cohere with the majority scholarly view that the formulation of the slogan "It is well for a man not to touch a woman" was one proposed by the Corinthian men.[2] The Christ-followers may also have been struck by particular sayings of Jesus in the synoptic traditions which would have justified a radically ascetic attitude.[3] Matthew 19:10-12, in particular, claims that the disciples of Jesus responded to his prohibition of divorce (vv. 3-9) with the remarkable conclusion that it is "not beneficial to marry." The ideology behind such a response may be that the higher calling of the kingdom of heaven necessarily prompted a rejection on their part to become permanently involved in the responsibilities of a husband, father and householder.[4]

While Paul would certainly agree with the underlying sentiment of exclusive and total allegiance to the cause of Christ, his rational response was a desire to nuance the congregation's spiritual aspirations in light of the potential danger of sexual immorality. Some, for example, may have found the withholding of sexual intimacy by their spouse to be unacceptable, and difficulties may have arisen if certain spouses were demanding a divorce in the interests of holiness (7:10-11). In both cases the pursuit of sexual relations by the deprived spouse may have led to sexual immorality or to the use of prostitutes (which Paul has castigated in 1 Corinthians 6).[5] Equally, Paul's anxiety may also stem from the

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[1] See MacDonald 1990:170-171.

[2] So, Hurd 1965:120-123; Barrett 1971:154-155; Yarbrough 1985:93-96; Fee 1987:272-277; Schrage 1995:59; Rosner 1994:151; D. B. Martin 1995:205; Deming 1996:110-114, 122; Thiselton 2000:498ff. The social location of the men advocating such abstinence is difficult to ascertain. It may well have been the wealthier who were at leisure to think such thoughts, but, of course, one would not need to be a physician, Stoic, or Cynic to be cognizant of contemporary attitudes to sexuality and asceticism.

[3] E.g. Lk 10:38-42; 14:26; 17:26-27; 18:29-30; 20:34-35.

[4] The disciples' response is similarly construed by the followers of Basilides, an early second-century Gnostic group. They claimed that Jesus' disciples took this position "on account of the circumstances arising from marriage, fearing the demands on their leisure time associated with providing for the necessities of life" (Clem. Al. *Strom.* bk. 3 ch. 1.1.4.[2.195.14-17S], quoted in Deming 1995:99).

[5] See MacDonald 1990:162.

understanding that not all are called to celibacy, as he now is (7:7).[1] The striving to holiness through compulsory celibacy by those not granted the divine gift to do so may damage their devotion to the Lord and perhaps cause them to fall prey to immorality.[2]

Paul's response is to redefine radically for the Corinthians the normative cultural understanding of the relationship of marriage (i.e. that its sole purpose was for the procreation of legitimate heirs), for not only does he perceive marriage within a context of mutual responsibility and reciprocal "authority" over the *other's* body (7:3-4), but also as the *sole* context for the "mutual satisfying of erotic desires"[3] (7:2, 5). This emphasis, of course, is perhaps prompted by the discussion of prostitution in 6:12-20. The concession allowed in 7:5 for abstinence *within marriage* so that believers might spend time in prayer is only temporary; it is not a complete renunciation of marital intercourse, which would be the position of some philosophical and ascetic groups.[4]

The contextual parallel in 1 Thess 4:3b-5 is of interest, for here Paul seeks to explain to his Thessalonian converts how they are to reorient their sexual lifestyle within their Greco-Roman cultural milieu.[5] His emphasis is upon the exercise of sexual self-control (cf. 1 Cor 7:5, 9), "in holiness and honour" (1 Thess 4:4). The use of τιμή suggests that, parallel to the Corinthian correspondence, the sexual conduct of the Thessalonians must be one of honour, for, as noted above, sexual promiscuity had severe consequences in that it dishonoured both parties involved. To use the body dishonourably is to dishonour God,

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[1] On the debate as to whether Paul was married or not, see most recently J. H. Elliot 2002.
[2] Cf. Peter Brown's paraphrase of διὰ τὰς πορνείας (1Cor 7:2): "because of the temptation of immorality that abstinence might provoke" (1988:55).
[3] So, Ward 1990:286-87.
[4] On the notion that a sexual relationship is in tension with a life of prayer, see also *T. Naph.* 8.7-10; and cf. Wis 8.20-21. It is quite possible, too, that some of the Corinthians saw in Paul a model of asceticism which they sought to emulate (cf. Paul's vows in Acts 18:18; 21:23-24, though Haenchen 1971:543, 610 for reliability).
[5] See Yarbrough 1985:65-87; D. B. Martin 1995:216; Witherington 1995:175. Yarbrough in particular seeks to place Paul's call to holiness of life in 1 Thess 4:2-8 as a formulation for principles later expounded in 1 Cor 7.

Christ, and the Holy Spirit (so, 1 Thess 4:1, 7, 8, where such sentiments parallel those in 1 Cor 6:12-20). That a similar line of thought is being used by Paul is suggested by 1 Thess 4:7-8, where Paul warns his readers that God did not call them to impurity but to holiness, and that to reject holiness is to reject God who has blessed them with his Holy Spirit.

In sum, we have seen that within the male dominated ideology of the first-century CE, marriage was an institution by which a man could successfully enhance his property and wealth, and so improve his social distinction and status. Marriage held little commitment but was primarily a tool for a man in the pursuit of honour. If it was socially beneficial for a man to divorce and re-marry he would most-likely do so. Likewise, if a man was influenced by the Stoic or Cynic doctrine of the undesirability or harmful nature of sexual intercourse he could simply choose, unilaterally, to cease his sexual activity (both within and outside of the marriage relationship) and to pursue a life of celibacy. Self-control was, as noted above, an essential prerequisite for the man of honour (cf. 1 Cor 7:5, 9). This would be especially pertinent if copulation was considered to be directly related to bodily disease, dissipation and weakness. So, too, if the singular pursuit of philosophy (and with it the concomitant rejection of sexual activity) could lead to a superiority of status and honour far above the "common man," many may have considered it an ideal worth pursuing. And, naturally, the hierarchical characteristics of supreme freedom, wisdom, self-control, and virtue espoused by the Greco-Roman philosophers may have been especially appealing.[1]

Such were some of the pressures upon the Corinthian community. And added to the Stoic and Cynic doctrine of undistracted philosophical pursuit was, of course, its *raison d'être*: the "divine mission." If sexual abstinence could enable the true philosopher, albeit a

[1] As above, the social location of Christ-followers adhering to such views is difficult to ascertain. It may well have been higher status believers, but one need not exclude others.

pagan one, to be *wholly* devoted to the service of his "god," then the same should be true for the Christ-follower. Such thoughts may have been especially attractive for those overly preoccupied with spiritual gifts such as prophecy and tongues; and, given that the contemporary Hebrew-Judean social context was also replete with ascetics devoting themselves exclusively to Yahweh, the very same God to whom the Corinthians claimed exclusive allegiance, this may have provided further impetus for some in the community to do likewise. Many may have believed that, in the words of Philo, "the wise man alone is both free and rules."[1] Since the Corinthians appear to have thought of themselves as kings in this spiritual or philosophical sense,[2] their understanding of marriage as a form of "slavery" may have intensified their negative appraisal of marriage inasmuch as it threatened their putative royal status.

Much of this, of course, was directly linked to the male perspective on status and honour, and Paul correctly perceived the potential divisiveness of a two-tier morality in which the spiritual "elite" may have claimed a "higher" lifestyle.[3] As with the Corinthians' self-aggrandizement over apostolic partisanship, wisdom, patronage, litigation, prophecy and tongues, the same may well have been the case with sexual asceticism. That is, in the radical pursuit of devotion to God certain Corinthians may have expected a reciprocal measure of divine wisdom, self-control, virtue, and spiritual freedom. Like prophecy and tongues, such qualities were obviously sought after within the community and were perhaps perceived to stand as the supreme categories of status and honour. Hence, on this reading, sexual asceticism was directly linked to notions of honour.

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[1] *Post.* 138.
[2] See 1 Cor 4:8. On Stoic influence here see Conzelmann 1975:87.
[3] See Yarbrough 1985:96-117.

3.3.2 1 Cor 7:17-24

Remaining in the Condition Called

These verses have recently been described as Paul's "guiding principle behind his advice on marriage."[1] That they are pivotal within the chapter as a whole and demarcate Paul's understanding on calling and status is a scholarly assessment which appears to be widely accepted.[2] But the apparent digression concerning circumcision and slavery in the middle of a chapter on marriage appears somewhat puzzling. S. S. Bartchy argues convincingly however that Paul's aside is typical of a pattern he uses elsewhere (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; cf. Col 3:11); a pattern which draws upon three essential social distinctions of Greco-Roman society: sex (male/female), status (slave/free), and ethnicity (Judean/Greco-Roman).[3] It is not incongruous, then, that Paul's digression focuses upon two of the central social and ethnic distinctions within the Corinthian congregation. There is no evidence that circumcision and slavery were points of contention at Corinth; rather, they are simply illustrations to clarify his argument regarding the central underlying issue—the Corinthians' desire to change their marital "position" in pursuit of greater status and honour.[4]

Paul's argument is structured around the single imperative, ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει ᾗ ἐκλήθη ἐν ταύτῃ μενέτω ("remain in the condition in which you were called," v. 20), the sense of which both opens and concludes this section (vv. 17, 24). In his opinion, those who are married should remain so and those who are single should remain single (his emphasis on not seeking a change in status occurs in every subsection of

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[1] Hays 1997:122.

[2] So, Fee 1987:268, 307; Rosner 1994:147; Dawes 1996:84; Horrell 1996:158; Furnish 1999:51; Thiselton 2000:544.

[3] Bartchy 1973. Cf. Deming 1995:159-160.

[4] Paul frequently uses illustrations to clarify his argument, e.g. in Rom 7:2-3; 9:21-23; 11:16-24; 1 Cor 3:5-17; 9:25-27; 12:14-27; 14:7-8; 15:36-44; Gal 4:1-2. However, what is distinctive here in vv. 17-24 is that circumcision and slavery are not images or metaphors drawn from nature or from other areas of human life as so often employed by Paul.

the chapter[1]). His remarks in 7:28, 36, that those who marry do not sin, suggests that there were some within the congregation who held that marriage was to be rejected, but Paul dismisses any such evaluation and clearly affirms that marriage is perfectly acceptable—it does not entail sin, and those already married should certainly not separate. Marriage or celibacy in themselves are essentially unimportant for Paul, a point illustrated by his comments on circumcision ("circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing," 7:19). Rather, his urging for the Corinthians is simply that they should remain in the position called.

The illustrative use of epispasm, the surgical operation to remove the marks of circumcision, suits Paul's argument well at this point.[2] The practice began during the Hellenistic period and persisted into the first-century CE and beyond,[3] especially in the Diaspora where Judeans were aware of negative Greco-Roman attitudes towards circumcision (it was commonly ridiculed, and was mocked as a form of castration by the Romans).[4] Schürer suggests that epispasm was undertaken specifically in order "to avoid mockery in public baths,"[5] which was, of course, the primary setting for a variety of business and social engagements and a crucial locale for maintaining or seeking to advance one's honour standing. Bruce Winter reinforces such sentiments when he writes, "It is clear from the evidence that the purpose of reversing circumcision related to social standing in the Roman empire," and with it "the career opportunities" which may have opened up.[6] Many Judeans were perhaps enticed by the social perquisites of successful Greco-Roman contemporaries, and hence, epispasm was construed to present a definite social advantage.

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[1] Vv. 2, 8, 10, 11, 12-16, 17, 20, 24, 26-27, 37, 40.
[2] Epispasm is described in detail by Celsus in his medical handbook *De Medicina* (7.25).
[3] See 1 Mac 1:11-15; 2 Mac 4:11-17; Jos. *Ant.* 12.5.241; Schürer 1.148ff.
[4] Philo *Spec.* 1.2; Jos. *Ap.* 2.137; Mart. *Ep.* 7.82; Balsdon 1979:216, 231.
[5] 1.148-149.
[6] Winter 1994:152; cf. Thiselton 2000:551.

Paul's analogy points to the fact that some within the Christ-movement were apparently advocating and urging singleness and celibacy in the desire for enhanced status and honour within the community. But he makes a stark point of clarification in v. 19—as circumcision is irrelevant before God so too is the distinction of marriage or celibacy; what matters is obedience to the commands of God irrespective of one's position when called. Those who have chosen a life of celibacy, or those who now find themselves in a state of singleness, can "take advantage of this opportunity to remain single-mindedly devoted to the Lord (cf. v. 35)."[1] Paul's overriding concern is to adumbrate that life 'in Christ' should be less about attempting to *change* one's status in a determination to appropriate greater honour, than about the *use* of that status for the purposes of God.

The Social Context of Slavery[2]

Slavery was an established fact of life in the ancient world, and as many as one-third of the inhabitants of most large urban centres were slaves.[3] The sources of slavery, other than those born into it, included the sale and theft of children, the kidnapping of adults (cf. 1 Tim 1:10), and the capture of prisoners of war and enemy populations. In some cases it also came from those who voluntarily sold themselves into slavery—a device of last resort for someone in debt (although in some cases a degree of choice might be exercised concerning

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[1] Dawes 1996:96. Paul sees a definite advantage in remaining single and celibate, and makes this perfectly clear (vv. 7, 8, 25-35, 36-38, 40).

[2] See especially, Hopkins 1978; Wiedemann 1981, 1987; Rollins 1987; D. B. Martin 1990; Bradley 1994; Deming 1995:150-154; Witherington 1995:172f., 181-185; Combes 1998; Thiselton 2000:562-565; Glancy 2002. On slaves at Corinth, Spawforth 1996.

[3] Rollins 1987:102. On the variety of slave occupations, see Rollins 1987:102; D. B. Martin 1990:11-22; Barclay 1991:166; Glancy 2002:42-43.

the identity of the owner).[1] In strictly legal terms the slave had no personal rights but was "*a thing*" (Latin, *res*), i.e., the property of the owner.[2] From one perspective, slavery could certainly be oppressive and exploitative—it was assumed that slaves would be disciplined by flogging or worse, and many were expected to provide sexual favours for their owner and his (or her) guests.[3] Owners even had the right to torture or kill their slaves. From another perspective, however, many slave owners believed that it was in their best interests to care for their slaves, and some regarded it as a matter of honour to treat well those slaves who gave good service and to reward loyal service with manumission.[4]

The overwhelming perspective of slavery in the literary sources (i.e., by the upper classes) was one of scorn and disdain, and the general reaction toward thoughts of upward social mobility of slaves was one of ridicule and opposition. D. B. Martin writes, "Slave terminology almost always carries negative connotations in Greco-Roman literature. Slaves are despised, and terms such as *doulos* and *servus* connote abuse or degradation."[5] Such attitudes were long-standing. Homer claimed that a man lost half his selfhood when "the day of slavery" came upon him, for a distinctive feature of Greek self-awareness was the concept of freedom—the Greek man found his personal dignity to be inextricably linked to the fact that he was free (*Il* 6.463).[6] In the first century CE, Dio Chrysostom confirmed that, "men desire above all things to be free and say that freedom is the greatest of blessings, while

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[1] See further Crook 1967:60; D. B. Martin 1990:41-42; Winter 1994:154; Thiselton 2000:565. On selling oneself into slavery to clear debts, Ulpian *Edict* 54, XL.12.7; Dio Chrys. 15.23; Petron. *Sat.* 57.4. Clement mentions Christ-followers who sold themselves into slavery to pay for food for others (*1 Clem.* 55.2).

[2] See Chapter 2 above; D. B. Martin 1990:xiii.

[3] See Petron. *Sat*, 75.11; Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.116-119; Sen. *Controv.* 4 preface 10; Dio Chrys. 15.5.

[4] Barclay 1991:168-169. On these two perspectives, cf. Apuleius (*Met.* 9.12) who notes the appalling conditions of certain slaves working in a flour-mill, with "marks of old floggings, letters marked on their forehead and irons on their legs." In contrast, the living conditions of certain urban slaves were relatively luxurious and some were considered extended family members (Treggiari 1991:14).

[5] 1990:46.

[6] See esp. Rengstorf *TDNT* 2.262.

slavery is the most shameful and wretched of states."[1] And Epictetus claimed that once enslaved, "it is the slave's prayer that he be set free immediately."[2] Amongst Judean texts, Philo relates the extraordinary tale,

> ...that some Dardanian women who had been taken prisoners by the Macedonians, and looking upon slavery as the most disgraceful of all evils, threw their children, whom they were carrying at their bosoms, into the deepest part of a nearby river, saying: "At all events you shall not be slaves, but, before you can begin to experience such a miserable life, you shall cut off all such necessity, and travel in freedom the inevitable and last road of human existence." (*Prob.* 115)

Slavery reached into every aspect of Roman life, it was a position of bondage, shame and disgrace, and hence provided a ready and useful metaphor for a variety of situations.[3]

Given the above, it is perfectly reasonable to assume that the aim of a slave was to rise above his status of shame and dishonour and seek, at some point, to be manumitted. Indeed, manumission was so common that slaves could normally look forward to the time when they would become freedmen; and, equally, the thoughts of such future opportunities were used by slave masters in their expectation of good behaviour, hard work and peremptory obedience.[4] Manumission heralded, of course, a significant rise in social status and honour. Freed slaves joined the body of other free non-citizens and so had the

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[1] Dio Chrys. 14.1; cf. Philo *Spec.* 2.84; Sen. *Ben.* 3.19.
[2] Epictetus *Diss.* 4.1.33. See also Philo *Prob.* 141, and the work in general.
[3] The ubiquitous institution of slavery in the first-century CE means that the presence of slaves in the early Christ-movement and the acceptance of slavery as a part of life can both be taken for granted. It is specifically documented at a number of places, Col 4:1; Tit 2:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10, 6:2; Phlm; Rev. 18:13. It is also reflected in the imagery and metaphors of the Gospels where slaves frequently appear as stock figures in the sayings and parables of Jesus. Many of the epistles employ the metaphor when describing the enslavement of the unrighteous (to for e.g. sin, or the elements of the universe); or to signify the believer as a slave of Christ (Rom 6:22; 1 Pet 2:16; Jas 1:1); or to portray Christ himself as taking upon the form of a slave (Phil 2:7).
[4] See Bartchy 1973:82-91, 97, 111, 113, 136; Alföldy 1985:136-141. Tacitus writes (*Ann.* 13.26), "...it would be no great burden to a manumitted slave to keep his freedom by the same obedience which had earned it." Bartchy's central thesis is that a slave had no influence in his/her manumission and could neither refuse nor demand it (Bartchy 1973:87-120; 175-177). See also Glancy 2002.

possibility of promotion to full citizenship (in Rome, a slave freed by a citizen was normally admitted to citizenship).[1]

But Paul's emphasis in the text falls in 7:21a ("Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you," NIV), for it is this attitude which he is about to explicate in 7:22-23.[2] Paul's reasoning is that a slave who is called by Christ is actually a "freed person belonging to the Lord" and so should not be concerned about his current worldly status. At the same time, the free person called by Christ is now a slave of Christ—that is, his/her new relationship with Christ can most suitably be described by the metaphor of slavery. The final result is not simply a "minimizing [of] present social status,"[3] but an actual *reversal* of social status—the slave becomes a freed person and the free man a slave. It is the slave who is now accorded the higher status in the family of God. But the metaphor should not perhaps be pressed too far, for in the final analysis Paul is rejecting the import of any and all worldly social status. The status of slave or free is of no consequence for those now in Christ.[4]

In 7:23, Paul repeats the slave market metaphor employed in 6:20. Through his death on the cross, Christ has paid the necessary price to redeem those whom he has called. Here, however, the imagery applies to both slave and free. For the free person, the metaphor, as in 6:20, speaks of a change of status into one of slavery by the redemptive-purchase of another; but for the slave the metaphor is one of transfer-purchase in order to be set free (cf. Gal 4:5;

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[1] See Hopkins 1978:133-171; Garnsey/Saller 1987 esp. pp. 113-115; 120-125.

[2] My interpretation of 1 Cor 7:21 takes the aorist imperative χρῆσαι to have as its implied indirect object '*freedom*' (so Bartchy 1973:177-179; Fee 1987:315-318; Rosner 1994:174; 1998:698; Horrell 1996:162-167; Glancy 2002:68-69; RSV, NIV, REB), rather than '*slavery*' (so Barrett 1971:170; Conzelmann 1975:127; Combes 1998:56-58; Thiselton 2000:553-559; NRSV, NJB). For exegetical comments on both sides of the debate see Horrell 1996:162-167; Thiselton 2000:553-559. For my purposes here, however, the exegesis of 7:21 is secondary to what I consider Paul's primary point outlined in 7:22.

[3] So, Fee 1987:319.

[4] As Fee (1987:322) asserts, "Status of any kind is ultimately irrelevant with God."

Rev 5:9).[1] For both, there is an element of slavery and freedom, and for both there is status and honour to be found in Christ. The slave has been transferred to the ownership of a master of supreme honour and has been granted freedom. The freeman has been enslaved to Christ but at the same time set free from worldly things to serve Christ alone. Paul's final imperative is that as both are now under Christ's rightful ownership neither should "become slaves of human masters," (by which Paul must be referring to a spiritual bondage to doctrines or ideologies "of men" since the believing slave of vv. 21-22 cannot "become" a slave of men in the physical sense, as he already is one[2]). Both slave and free should live as people devoted exclusively to the lordship of Christ.[3]

3.3.3 Summary

It is evident that the examples of circumcision and slavery were not chosen at random. They have a clear and direct role, illustrating by way of analogy, Paul's understanding of marriage and celibacy. To counter the Corinthians' perspective on the "higher" calling of celibacy, Paul uses the example of circumcision, which illustrates perfectly the precept that each should remain in the position called (vv. 17, 20, 24).[4] The second illustration, that of slavery, demonstrates that one's state of either freedom or slavery was inconsequential (v. 21a). In 7:24, Paul writes, "In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God," for Christ, who took upon himself the form of

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[1] In this context, the metaphor sees Christ as a customer at a slave auction purchasing the slaves of another (see Glancy 2002:66).
[2] With Bartchy 1973:182; contra Fee 1987:320, n. 58.
[3] Cf. D. B. Martin (1990:66), "Because they are now slaves of Christ, they should not willingly become slaves of any human being. To do so would be to pass from high-slave status in a highly placed household to a position in a lesser household."
[4] As Fee writes: "...the call *to* Christ has created such a change in one's essential relationship (with God) that one does not need to seek change in other relationships (with people). These latter are transformed and given new meaning by the former. Thus one is no better off in one condition than in the other" (1987:307).

a slave and who died the slave's death, is able to empathize with that position. Both illustrations, and the scenarios behind them, have at their centre the seeking after enhanced social status and honour. Indeed, the context of 7:17-24, within the chapter as a whole, suggests that Paul's concern remains that of admonishing the Corinthians over an obsessive preoccupation with "status-betterment" (striving for celibacy in the craving for spiritual gain, and hence improved honour within the community).

The apostle is, once again, urging upon the Corinthians a radically different world-view. They are no longer to participate in the bondage of an honour-shame culture where personal or group significance revolves round what status and honour is achieved in human eyes. The cross has shattered cultural conventions and norms—Christ has paid the price necessary to "buy" them out of the world and to re-locate them as part of his body. The cultural lust for "upward mobility," greater influence, or higher status in the eyes of the world by changes in circumstances is now to be abandoned, for it is ultimately irrelevant. Although there may be some advantage in singleness and celibacy, before God they hold no spiritual significance whatsoever, and Paul's central paraenesis then, is less to disallow relational changes but, as the imperative of v. 21 urges, to maximize one's status and relational situation at the time of one's call. It is one's calling in Christ and the exigencies of the "impending crisis" (v. 26) which must raise one above the cultural preoccupations with status and honour. Change may certainly occur, but the pursuit of that change simply for the sake of one's personal honour standing is to be rejected. After all, God's call and demands came to the Corinthians regardless of status and the categories in which they found themselves, and from that very position they were granted the privilege and supreme honour of incorporation into his one body.

3.4 1 Corinthians 8-11:1

The city of Corinth, like any other comparable city of the Roman empire, accommodated a plethora of temples and shrines. Archaeological evidence points to remains of temples of Aphrodite, Octavia, Apollos, Demeter and Kore, Asklepios, Hera Acraia, and Dionysus from the time of Paul,[1] while ancient literary evidence suggests the presence of many more.[2] As J. T. Sanders observes, "One might say that the gods in Corinth...were omnipresent and inescapable."[3] The presentation of offerings and, more importantly, the sacrificing of animals towards the deity were deemed an essential prerequisite for the well-being of the city and for the Empire.[4] For both the Greeks and Romans, sacrifice was the central and most significant act of religion.[5]

The following section will begin by outlining the Greco-Roman context of sacrifice and meals. It will then proceed to an analysis of idolatry in its Hebrew-Judean context, and finally to an examination of 1 Corinthians 8-11:1.

3.4.1 Greco-Roman Context

Sacrifice in the Greco-Roman World[6]

The typical Roman civic sacrifice embraced three initial phases: the *praefatio*, the *immolation*, and the slaughtering of the animal (predominantly sheep, goats, pigs, or cattle;

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[1] See Stambaugh/Balch 1986:158f; Koester 1990; Oster 1992; P. D. Gooch 1993:2-26; J. T. Sanders 1997:71f.; and esp. Winter 1990:210-215.
[2] Pausanius details temples and shrines dedicated to Zeus, Hermes, Poseidon, Asclepios and Isis, Aphrodite, Athena, Artemis, and Cyclopes (see Winter 1990; Murphy-O'Connor 1983).
[3] 1997:71.
[4] See p.38 and n.3.
[5] So, Price 1984:207; Stowers 1995:295.
[6] On the distinction of political sacrifice (here designated as *civic* sacrifice) and domestic sacrifice see Malina 1998. On sacrifice in a domestic setting, see below, section 4.1.

chosen in accordance with the divinity's function and the religious context). After the purification of both the participants and the victims, a procession was led to the altar where the presiding figure celebrated the *praefatio*—the offering of incense and wine as a solemn salutation affirming the superiority of the god or gods. Kent Stowers details what follows,

> Suddenly the animal was struck down unconscious or dead and then bled with two knives...The blood was very carefully collected and poured over the altar. Sacrificing men handled the blood, symbol of creative and procreative power, in an act of exchange between themselves and the gods. All of this served as prelude to the distribution and consumption of the lifeless animal, which had thus been ritually rendered suitable for eating. In a major civic sacrifice, the man who actually wielded the knife was a professional civic-religious functionary. He skinned and carved the animal in a sequence and manner of division loaded with social-religious significance. The bones wrapped in fat were the god's portion burned on the altar. The central moment and focus of the sacrifice were the eating of the roasted *splachna*, the noble viscera (liver, lungs, heart, kidneys), while the god's portion ascended as smoke from the altar. In this high point of the sacrifice, only an elite inner circle of men near the altar ate the holy meat of the viscera cooked on skewers. In the second phase, quarters of meat were placed in a caldron to boil and were distributed in various ways for a nearby wider feast or to be eaten elsewhere. (1995:298)[1]

Such sacrifices were offered for a variety of reasons—as part of the regular priestly duties for the maintenance of the cult; on behalf of cities and citizens (as part of the temple's public function); or perhaps as a thank-offering following some miracle or vision.[2] Private bloodless offerings are also attested. These were made by those seeking the aid of a god and included the presentation of cakes (sweetened with oil, wine or honey); cheese-cakes; or figs.[3]

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[1] See also Lucian *Sacr.* 3.169; Witherington 1995:188-195; Malina 1998:30-33.
[2] See Willis 1985a:13; P. D. Gooch 1993:20ff.
[3] P. D. Gooch 1993:22.

Essentially, animal sacrifice and the presentation of offerings was an integral aspect of Greco-Roman civic life for there was no separation of the religious and the secular. Most of the sacrificial celebrations, particularly those involving some form of communal sacrifice, were attended by those who exercised power in the community—these were times at which the local elites were able to express their positions of superiority within the civic community.[1] The sacrifices, after all, were made in order to bring honour to the respective god and, hence, the public proffering of honour to the deity undoubtedly redounded upon the powerful of the community who took the highly visible central roles in such sacrificial ceremonies.[2] The honour of the elite was, to a large extent, at one with that of the deity.

The archaeological remains of Corinth also demonstrate the existence of many dining halls within the temple complexes: the temple of Demeter and Kore was found to contain fifty-two such halls[3] many of which must have been in use during the period of Paul's ministry in Corinth;[4] subterranean dining rooms were discovered within the sanctuaries of Dionysus and Asclepius; and integrated within the latter was the fountain house of Lerna which housed a further three dining rooms.[5] The co-existence of the temple and the dining room should come as no surprise, for sacrifices were inextricably linked to the cultic feasts which followed. Indeed, in some respects the act of killing the animal was only a prelude to the central significance of the sacrifice—the cooking of the meat (including that offered to the deity) and the communal eating of it.[6] The wealthier members of the Corinthian Christ-movement would certainly have been invited to participate in such

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[1] See Price 1984:229-234.
[2] On such honours and privileges, see, e.g. Braund no. 130.
[3] Bookidis 1990.
[4] So, Bookidis and Fisher 1972:299. Cf. Murphy-O'Connor 1983.
[5] A detailed investigation of the close proximity of the Asclepieion and Lerna is central to the thesis of P. D. Gooch (1993; see esp. pp. 15-26).
[6] See Price 1984:229; Willis 1985a:10; Stowers 1995:297.

occasions as a normal and regular part of civic social life; indeed, one's attendance and sponsorship of such events was an essential part of the honour-bound networking deemed vital for the higher-status members of the city.[1] Within such a social context, to imagine that someone would wish to decline the offer of sacrificial meat was most likely inconceivable. Further, for someone to actually do so would have had immeasurable social consequences—certainly the immediate loss of honour and with it a degree of social disgrace, contempt or ridicule, and perhaps even social ostracism or worse.

But civic sacrificial ceremonies were not the only occasions at which sacrificial offerings were presented. Domestic sacrifices and feasts were held for many significant social occasions: the birth of a child; birthdays; the coming of age of an adolescent; weddings; funerals; and occasions of healing, good fortune or political advancement.[2] They may even have been held simply as a form of good entertainment.[3] Such dining invitations were a common feature of Greco-Roman life[4] and would have been sent to family and friends, as well as to those associates made by occupational or civic ties. While the public festivals may have accommodated the largest numbers, the private sacrificial feasts were certainly more frequent,[5] and participation in such meals, which were clearly seen as having a religious *character* (and not just a religious component), was an essential part of family and community life in the first-century CE.[6] To eat the sacrificial meat served on such

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[1] Cf. Theissen 1982:130f.
[2] See Conzelmann 1975:147 and nn. 9-11; Fee 1980:183-185; MacMullen 1981:34-42; Murphy-O'Connor 1983:161-165; Willis 1985a:13-15, 236, and esp. his list of texts and translations pp. 40-42; Chow 1992:146; Witherington 1995:188.
[3] Willis 1985a:236.
[4] See Blue 1991:222-224.
[5] So, Willis 1985a:14.
[6] See Fee 1980:185.

occasions was simply social courtesy; to refuse to share in the meal would be an affront to the host and other guests.[1]

The literary evidence pertaining to simple meals eaten in private homes or the *popinae* (public houses) is more complex.[2] Certainly, there is evidence of meals eaten in homes which involved sacrifice—these were no doubt occasions of social importance or celebration instigated by the wealthy (as above). But the literature also shows instances where the mention of meals is made with no reference, even implied, to sacrifice or rites.[3] Such meals appear to be in view in 1 Cor 10:27-28 where Paul concedes that a believer is able to participate in a social function and to consume the food provided, unless it is revealed that the food has been previously offered to an idol. If it *is* made known that this is the case, the believer is not to eat it. Within such a scenario it is obvious that Paul therefore precludes the eating of food which may *in situ* be offered to an idol. (So, too, he must also believe that there will be occasions where food will be provided with *no* cultic past and that none will be offered at the meal.)[4] As for the meals eaten in the *popinae*, these were typically vegetarian. A succession of emperors, in an attempt to "encourage general frugality" (so, Tiberius) or to reform daily life (so, Claudius), restricted all but the simplest food to be cooked and served in the eating houses.[5] But at certain times meat was available for special occasions, some of which may have been from sacrificial offerings (so, Juvenal[6]),

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[1] In the agonistic environment of Greco-Roman culture, some meals provided a forum for situations of challenge-response. An invitation to a meal may be considered a challenge; the appropriate response must be to accept the invitation. See esp. Malina/Neyrey 1991:28-38, 49-52.

[2] On this see the analysis of Greco-Roman meals made by P. D. Gooch 1993:27-46; on *popinae*, Meggitt 1998; Theissen 2003:381ff.

[3] So, P. D. Gooch 1993:38.

[4] Many commentators assume that the text in question refers to a meal in a private home (so, Barrett 1971:241; Fee 1987:482; Witherington 1995:227; Hays 1997:176; Thiselton 2000:786), and this may well be the case, but it is by no means certain. It could refer to a private meal in a temple precinct (Conzelmann 1975:177).

[5] On Tiberius, Suet. *Tib.* 34.1; on Claudius, Suet. *Claud.* 38.2; Dio Cass. 60.6.7; on Nero, Suet. *Nero* 16.2; on Vespasian, Dio Cass. 65.10.3.

[6] *Sat.* 11.81-85.

and other types such as pork (regularly kept by peasants), veal, poultry, game, and wild birds (partridges, quails, pheasants) may also have been available.[1]

The possibility remains, then, that in each of the scenarios described above, there may be occasions where food is present which has no cultic past and where it will not be offered to an idol. Such meals may have been rare, but certainly not absent from the social calendar. In one of Pliny's letters, for example, he protests to an acquaintance of the latter's failure to keep an important social engagement and lists the variety of food that was to be served: lettuce, snails, eggs, barley water, sweet wine, olives, beets, gourds, shalots, oysters, sea-urchins. None of these were food-types normally offered to a god, and it is pertinent that there is no mention of meat.[2] Furthermore, Plutarch's comment that whenever the Pythagoreans ate meat, they *usually* ate from sacrificial animals, implies that others might eat non-sacrificial meat.[3] So, too, Tertullian remarks that, "We [Christians] live with you [pagans]...[and] enjoy the same food...We cannot dwell together in the world without the market-place, without your butchers."[4] Yet Tertullian condemns the eating of idol food. Therefore it is clear that non-sacrificial meat was available in the market in Tertullian's time and there is no reason to think that the situation would have been very different in the time of Paul.

Commensality and Honour

Just as the social and religious functions of civic sacrifice and domestic feasts cannot be distinguished, equally, one cannot separate sacrifice (together with the feasts that

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[1] Sen. *Ep.* 2.18.7-10; Juv. *Sat.* 11.82-85; Theissen 2003:382; *OCD* 603.
[2] *Ep.* 1.15.
[3] *Quest. conv.* 8.8.729.
[4] *Apol.* 42.

followed), from notions of honour. The two were inextricably linked. The earliest Greek literary texts demonstrate that sacrifice to one's gods was an essential and vital element in the proffering of suitable honour due to them.[1] Theophrastus indicated that there were three points of reference for sacrifice to one's gods: "honour, gratitude, and need,"[2] and Lucian provides a conversation between Hermes and Zeus during which Hermes speaks of one Timon of Collytus, who "often treated us to perfect sacrifices...a man who has burned so many fat thigh-bones of bulls and goats on the altar to honour us; indeed I have the steam of them still in my nostrils."[3]

Many of the important civic sacrifices began as a procession to the temple, at the end of which a large circle was formed, with the altar, the sacrificial animal and those in authority (the priests and other honoured participants) at the centre.[4] The distribution of the offering established a sense of hierarchy amongst those present; the inner circle received the most distinctive portions of the sacrifice (in terms of size and quality), the lesser portions being divided (unequally) amongst the rest.[5] Any foreigners or residents who did not hold citizenship (e.g. slaves) were either excluded or consigned to the margins of civic sacrifice. Such people could perhaps present offerings through the mediation of a citizen, but otherwise they were limited to sacrificing in private settings which further reinforced their marginality.[6] Hence, the gradations of honour and status were often clearly defined in respect of sacrifices and feasts. Thucydides, for example, tells of the hatred the Corinthians had towards the colony of Corcyra, "...for the reason that these, though Corinthian

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[1] *Il.* 1.457-475; Stowers 1995:321.
[2] In Porph. *Abst.* 2.24.
[3] *Tim.* 7.9.
[4] Apuleius (*Golden Ass* 11.8-12, 16-17, 24) describes a festive spring procession in honour of Isis (a popular cult in Corinth) from the city to the harbour at Cenchreae.
[5] The sense of supreme honour granted to the priests is also evident within Judean literature, Philo *Legat.* 1.131ff.
[6] See Thucydides 1.25.4. n.1; and Stowers 1995:326ff.

colonists, neglected the mother-city. For neither at their common festival gatherings would they concede the customary privileges to Corinthians, nor would they begin with a representative of Corinth the initial rites at sacrifices, as the rest of the colonies did, but they treated them with contempt."[1] The bitter animosity engendered between the two colonies was one wholly related to a point of honour.

As an individual, one way to raise one's own profile and increase one's status and honour was to endow an annual feast as a benefactor. The invitations to attend these feasts could be restricted to those of comparable or higher status (especially those who held, or had held, public office), and so these were an important means of accruing greater honour for oneself.[2] The very wealthy could afford to provide for large civic feasts.[3] Those seeking candidature for election to important and high profile civic roles, for example, often promised to carry out significant benefactions on election, such as the funding of feasts and banquets.[4] Certainly, active participation in sacrifices (and, though the sources do not describe this, one may presume that it would include the feasts which followed) was an obligation of those holding public office.[5] Without doubt, too, participation in political life in Greco-Roman cities would require involvement in all aspects of the civic cult.[6] Refusal to participate could, in the words of Seneca, "earn hostility and ridicule."[7] Of great interest in this regard is Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* wherein an account is given of Apollonius's defence before the Emperor Domitian on a charge of conspiracy, part of which concerns his

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[1] Thucydides 1.25.3-4. Loeb n.1: The "privileges" would be places of honour, animals for sacrifice presented by the colonies of the mother-city, sending of delegates to Corinthians festivals etc.
[2] See Danker 1982; Winter 1994:168-173.
[3] See Persius *Sat.* 6.48-51; *IG* IV/2, 65 quoted in Winter 1994:169.
[4] Danker 1982; Engels 1990:68f.; and see above pp. 44-45 on boasting, and section 2.4.4..
[5] See Achilles Tatius *Leucippe and Clitophon* 8.7.6; Hunt/Edgar *Select Papyri*, vol. 2, *Non-Literary Papyri* Loeb, 1954, p. 161.
[6] See P. D. Gooch 1993:27-46; Winter 1994:168-173.
[7] *Ep.* 5.3-4.

refusal to sacrifice. While Apollonius' refusal focusses upon two specific points (an abhorrence of slaughter and a reverence for life), what is most striking is that a refusal to participate in sacrifice necessitates articulate justification.[1] In the wider socio-religious context of first-century CE Greco-Roman society, the withdrawing from sacrificial practice and the refusal to eat sacrificed food meant, in practice, the forming of alternative societies.

With respect to everyday meals and food, the same constraints of honour and status apply equally. As P. D. Gooch pertinently observes, meals and food were "...markers of social status. In Greco-Roman society, you were what you ate, and—more important—you were whom you ate with."[2] Meals were a central focus of social intercourse, they performed a vital means by which a host could maintain his social contacts and his position in society, and they were also the primary means for social advancement in winning favours and benefits from his superiors.[3] The more lavish and novel the food, the greater the display of wealth and influence; and with it, the greater the prestige and honour for the host.[4] Learned conversation and entertainment was also of great import for those seeking to impress. Epictetus writes, "if a man...resorts to philosophers merely because he wants to make a display at a banquet...what else is he doing but trying to win the admiration of some senator sitting by his side?"[5]

It was held that a true friend was only someone with whom one had eaten and drunk. Seneca quotes a proverb of Epicurus, "You must reflect carefully beforehand with whom

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[1] Philostr. *VA* 7.32-8.8.
[2] 1993:38. Paul's use of συνεσθίειν at 1 Cor 5:11, demonstrates the centrality of this issue in the apostle's thought (cf. Gal 2:11-14)..
[3] P. D. Gooch 1993:40.
[4] See Juv. *Sat.* 3.1.140 (that a man's wealth can be measured by the number of courses he serves); Hor. *Sat.* 2.4, 2.8; Apul. *Met.* (trans. Graves p. 249, 252); Sen. *Ep.* 89, 95.
[5] *Dis.*1.26.9. Cf. Lucian *Gall.* 11 (a comic description of a poor man at a rich man's dinner, who is overwhelmed by the "learned" conversation, the entertainment, and the many courses).

you are to eat and drink rather than what you are to eat and drink. For a dinner of meats without the company of a friend is like the life of a lion or a wolf."[1] And Lucian confirms, "Nobody invites an enemy or unknown person to dinner; not even a slight acquaintance. A man must first, I take it, become a friend in order to share another's bowl and board... I have often heard people say: "How much of a friend is he, when he has neither eaten or drunk with us?""[2] Plutarch, too, refers to the "friend-making character of the dining table,"[3] and Cicero announces how he best spends his time, "I read or write something every day. Then lest I be denying friendship its due, I dine with my friends."[4]

Those desperate to win invitations to meals, with an eye, naturally, to social advancement, were known as "parasites" (the *parasitus*), and became stock characters in satire of the period (often being depicted as obsequious, unpleasant characters). It is again clear from the literature that attendance at meals given by social superiors was the primary means for winning favours and benefits. Epictetus points out the reasons why someone may, in this situation, be omitted from a guest-list, "You have not been invited to somebody's dinner party? Of course not; for you did not give the host the price at which he sells his dinner. He sells it for praise; he sells it for personal attention."[5] In other words, he sells it for honour!

To summarize. Sacrifice was an essential part of first-century Greco-Roman life. As Stowers writes,

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[1] *Ep.* 19.
[2] *Par.* 22. Cf. Lucian *Somn.* 11; Pliny *Ep.* 1.15; Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 612D, 726E; P. D. Gooch 1993:30-35, 43-44.
[3] *Quaest. conv.* 612D (Loeb 8.7).
[4] *Fam.* 9.36.2-4.
[5] *Ench.* 25.4-5. Cf. Lucian *Mother Knows Best* (*Satirical Sketches*, trans. Turner), p. 84. Catullus *Poem* 47 (trans. Whigham, p. 106), sympathizes with a friend "forced to hang about the street corners angling for invitations."

> With some effort we can begin to imagine the ubiquity of sacrifice in the Greco-Roman world. At a birthday party, a city festival, a social club—wherever people ate meals with meat—a sacrifice took place. When the gods were thanked, placated, or beseeched for blessings—beginning a meeting of the city council, setting out for war, after the birth of a child, entering manhood—Greeks sacrificed. All significant political bodies in the Greek city...were male sacrificing bodies that conducted no significant political activity without sacrifice. Sacrifice stood at the center of a complex set of cultural, social, and political institutions. (1995:295)

Meals were *the* central focus of social intercourse and were a significant indicator of social status. The literary evidence studied by P. D. Gooch (1993) and Cheung (1999) demonstrates that socially significant meals involved explicit religious rites, and, further, that even in a private setting such an association was likely. The frequency of festivals and pagan occasions meant that Greco-Romans may have eaten little meat except what was sacrificed.[1]

It would appear that the consumption of what the apostle Paul calls idol-food in 1 Corinthians 8-11:1 was unavoidable in normal social intercourse. If believers, following Paul's advice, attempted to avoid any situation where they would be expected to partake of food explicitly identified as idol-food, then it is very likely that they could not accept invitations to frequent and important occasions. Cheung writes, "To refuse to eat idol food presented at such meals would mark one as antisocial and invite misunderstanding and hostility. It would be to risk ostracism. By forfeiting a major means of social advancement, it would also be economically detrimental. Therefore the potential social impact of a

[1] So Rajak 1985:250f. An inscription from Pisidia tells how Zeus was offended when the servants of Meidon ate *unsacrificed* meat. The god struck Meidon dumb for three months until instructions were given in a dream to record the incident for posterity (cited in Stowers 1995:294). See also MacMullen 1981:40; and 1981:34-42 for a general description of the connections between eating and religious expression in the Roman period.

prohibition of idol food cannot be over-emphasized."[1] This, then, is the situation confronted by Paul in the wider context of 1 Corinthians 8-11:1.

3.4.2 Idolatry in its Hebrew-Judean Context

An examination of the OT perspective upon idolatry demonstrates that *the* primary issue of concern was the honour of Yahweh and the subsequent shame that might accrue to him when individuals, or the nation as a whole, worshipped false gods. The Pentateuchal narrative affirms in the opening commands of the Decalogue, the insistence of Yahweh that, "You shall have no other gods before me," "You shall not make for yourself an idol...You shall not bow down to them or worship them... for I am a jealous God" (Ex 20:3-5).[2] Indeed, the specific command to the wilderness community on entering the Promised Land was to destroy all the places of idolatry built by the present occupants[3]—the danger being that, in the words of Yahweh, "... when they [the present incumbents] prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices" (Ex 34:15).[4] But even before entering the Promised Land, Israel fell into idolatry at Shittim (Num 25), and the devastating plague sent among the Israelites killed 24,000 before the act of Phineas turned back the wrath of Yahweh. The concluding narrative indicates that the central issue of Israelite apostasy was that it undermined the honour due solely to Yahweh,

> The Lord said to Moses, "Phineas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honour among

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[1] 1999:38.
[2] Cf. Ex 34:14. On the prohibition of idolatry, see Dt 4:15-31.
[3] Ex 34:13.
[4] See also Dt 7:16ff.

> them...He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honour of his God and made atonement for the Israelites. (Num 25:10, 13, NIV)[1]

The Psalmist, too, speaks of Yahweh's own assertion that his honour is embedded in the exclusivity of the worship offered him (Ps 4:2), and such sentiments are re-asserted in the book of Isaiah which contains the most extensive link between idolatry and the nexus of honour-shame. Indeed, the very future of the northern state of Israel is seen to be immersed within the proper respect for Yahweh's honour. The progressive undermining of such honour, in the superficiality of sacrificial offerings, results in invasion, ruin, and expulsion from the land. That is, the shaming of Yahweh has a direct correlation to the nation's exile and concomitant shame. As Yahweh speaks through Isaiah,

> Yet you have not called upon me, O Jacob, you have not wearied yourselves for me, O Israel. You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings, not honoured me with your sacrifices...You have not bought any fragrant calamus for me, or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offences...So I will disgrace the dignitaries of your temple, and I will consign Jacob to destruction and Israel to scorn. (Isa 43:22-28, RSV)[2]

The Isaianic prophetic oracles repeatedly stress that honour and glory are to be given to Yahweh alone and that on the Day of the Lord all idolaters will find themselves shamed for their lack of trust in the one true God.[3] The makers of idols, in particular, will find themselves wholly disgraced,

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[1] Cf. Ps 106:28ff.
[2] In short, Israel's dishonouring of Yahweh leads irrevocably to the dishonouring of the nation.
[3] Isa 42:8, 17; Isa 48:5, 11; and cf. Isa 41:21-24; 43:22-28; 57:6-15; 66:3-6.

> All who make idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit; their witnesses neither see nor know. And so they will be put to shame. Who would fashion a god or cast an image that can do no good? Look, all its devotees shall be put to shame; the artisans too are merely human. Let them all assemble, let them stand up; they shall be terrified, they shall all be put to shame. (Isa 44:9-11)
>
> Truly you are a god who hides himself, O God and Saviour of Israel. All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced; they will go off into disgrace together. But Israel will be saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting. (Isa 45:15-17, NIV)[1]

Hence, the OT perspective upon idolatry consistently views it in honour-shame terms. The worship of an idol means that honour is granted to *it* rather than to Yahweh, resulting in dishonour for Yahweh. The jealousy of Yahweh surrounds the integrity and honour of his name, an honour which, once undermined, can only be restored by repentance on the part of his people or by an outpouring of his righteous wrath. Such actions re-establish his honour vis-à-vis a nation's pagan idols and the demons that ultimately lay behind them.[2]

Extra-Canonical Texts

The Judean texts of the intertestamental period and beyond both defend the traditional OT perspective on idolatry and, presumably with a loathing of encroaching hellenization, make a further critique of pagan attitudes to idols and sacrifices.[3] The author of Jubilees speaks of Greco-Roman behaviour as one of "defilement and shame" and warns his readers of serving their gods, by which they will become "a scandal...and an affliction

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[1] And see the examples in *Apoc. Ab.* 1-8.
[2] So, Dt 32:15-20; Ps 106:37; *Jub.* 22:17.
[3] Sometimes in an amusing way, as in the opening chapters of *Apoc. Ab.*

and a torment and a snare" (*Jub* 1.9). Jubilees urges the faithful neither to eat with pagans nor even to associate with them, for "their deeds are defiled, and all of their ways are contaminated, and despicable, and abominable. They slaughter their sacrifices to the dead, and to the demons they bow down" (*Jub* 22.16-17). Likewise, Wisdom of Solomon declares that the idols of the pagans are "an abomination and stumbling blocks to the souls of men, and a snare to the feet of the wise" (Wis 14.11). It recognises that, although the many images of monarchs and kings were originally made in order to honour them (Wis 14.15-21), the intensification of worship to mere stone or wood has been a trap for mankind that has led to bondage. In short, "the devising of idols was the beginning of spiritual fornication...and is the beginning and end of every evil" (Wis 14:12, 27).[1]

A most remarkable text is the long lament of Aseneth in *Joseph and Aseneth* 11-21, where Aseneth has cause to regret her past idolatry and participation in idol feasts,

> ...the Most High, hates all those who worship strange gods. Therefore he has come to hate me, too, because I worshiped dead and dumb idols, and blessed them, and ate from their sacrifice(s), and my mouth is defiled from their table, and I do not have the boldness to call on the Lord God of Heaven, the Most High, the Mighty One of the all powerful Joseph, because my mouth is defiled from the sacrifices of the idols. What a wretched woman I am...And now, in these tears of mine and the ashes strewn around and the filth of my humiliation, how shall I open my mouth to the Most High...my eyes are burning in shame from my many tears...I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much. And I have worshiped strange gods who were without number, and eaten bread from their sacrifices...Bread of strangulation I have eaten, and a cup of insidiousness I have drunk from the table of death. (*Jos. Asen.* 11.6b-9, 17; 13.9; 21.13-14)

[1] See also Wis 13:1-19; *Sib. Or.* 4.24-34.

This confession of guilt is followed by Aseneth's repentance and refusal to participate any further in idolatry and the eating of sacrifices. But she sees that such action provokes a sense of hatred from those around her and engenders ostracism from her immediate family,

> All people have come to hate me, and on top of those my father and my mother, because I, too, have come to hate their gods and have destroyed them, and caused them to be trampled underfoot by men. And therefore my father and my mother and my whole family have come to hate me and said, "Aseneth is not our daughter because she destroyed our gods." (*Jos. Asen.* 11.4-6)

The text demonstrates not only a Judean perspective upon idolatry and the eating of idol sacrifices, but also allows insight into the wider repercussions of a pagan refusing to participate in what was considered normative social behaviour. The hatred and ostracism described in the text may well have been descriptive of feelings vented at those pagans who chose to associate with Judean (or Christ-centred) culture to the exclusion of wider Greco-Roman social mores.

The same sentiments are found in Philo when he writes of the Mosaic stipulations for accepting pagans into the Israelite community. He claims that incomers should be accorded every favour and consideration, for "abandoning their kinsfolk by blood, their country, their customs and the temples and images of their gods, and the tributes and honours paid to them, they have taken the journey to a better home..." (*Virt.* 102). For Philo, the pagan moves from "idle fables" to the clear vision of truth and the "worship of the one and truly existing God;" and he claims that precisely by learning doctrine about God verses false idols that the conversion from ignorance to knowledge takes place.[1] In renouncing all prior social

[1] Cf. *Spec.* 1.15-30; *Decal.* 7-8, and the emphasis on honour-shame in both texts.

relationships, the pagan can then move towards the significant end, "namely, the honour of God" (*Spec.* 1.315ff.).

The extent to which the pious Judean, and presumably the pagan convert, should honour God in refusing to participate in pagan idolatry is highlighted in the gruesome narrative of 4 Maccabees 5, where Eleazar's refusal to eat idol meat corresponds with his honour of God and his refusal to put to shame the precepts and laws of God.[1] Similarly, Josephus claimed that he and other Israelites regarded "as the most essential task in life the observance of our laws and of the pious practices," and that it was held as "a point of honour to endure anything rather than transgress them," even "in the face of death."[2] After all, the OT law designated clearly what meats a man should abstain from, and what he may enjoy.[3]

The rabbinic writings are consistent with many of the above views, "He who renounces idol worship may be called a Jew" (*Meg* 13a); "Whoever repudiates idols, repudiates the whole Torah, but whoever repudiates idolatry is as though he accepted the whole Torah" (*Sipre Deut* Re`eh 54.86b).[4] The *Rabbinic Anthology* by Montefiore and Loewe contains a wide selection of texts relevant to the subject of idolatry and idol feasts, one of the most interesting being from the Jerusalem Talmud concerning Rabbi Abba b. Zemina,

> One may violate all laws in order to save life except idolatry, unchastity, murder. R. Abba b. Zemina stitched some clothes for a heathen in Rome. The heathen offered him `*terephah*` [forbidden] food, and said, `Eat.` He refused. The heathen said, `Eat, or I will kill you.` He replied, `If you wish to kill me, kill, but I will not eat *terephah* food.` The man said,

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[1] 4 Macc. 5:35.
[2] Jos. *Ap.* 1.60, 190; 2.235; cf. 2.271-272.
[3] Jos. *Ap.* 2.174.
[4] See also *Sipre Num* Shelah 111.31bff.

> `Henceforward, know that if you had eaten, I would have killed you; for one must be either completely Jew or completely heathen.` (*j. Seb.* 4.2.35a, line 49)[1]

The challenge of philosophical pluralism to Israelite monotheism in the late first-century or very early second-century CE also shows that the monotheism of the latter did not go unchallenged. The argument of a philosopher with the leading rabbi, R. Gamaliel II, focuses upon the statement concerning the jealousy of God over the worshipping of idols (Exodus 20:5). The philosopher asks "But is there any power in the idol that it should arouse jealousy? A hero is jealous of another hero, a wise man is jealous of another wise man, a rich man is jealous of another rich man, but has the idol any power that one should be jealous of it?"[2] While Gamaliel believed that the idol has no power, he responds with an argument that God is jealous because the honour rightly due to him by mankind is given to an idol.[3] This, and much of what follows below, makes perfect sense within a framework of 'limited good' (see above, p. 23-24).

The question of honour, within the context of idolatry, is also the precise point made by two later Christ-followers, both of whom draw upon the work of 1 Corinthians. Tertullian, in his wide-ranging discussion of various idols, concludes by asserting, "`Not that an idol is anything`, as the Apostle says, `but because what they do, they do in honor of demons` [1 Cor 8.4; 10.19] who take up their abode there at the consecration of idols, whether of the dead, or, as they think, of gods."[4] And, similarly, in Novatian's essay `On Jewish Meats` there is a strong argument for liberty with regard to food, but Novatian concludes by qualifying this liberty so that it does not include food offered to idols. The

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[1] In Montefiore/Loewe 1938:255.
[2] *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 55a; cf. *b. Sanh.* 63b.
[3] Mek *Bahodesh* vi (Ex. 20:3-6).
[4] *De spect.* 13.

situation is similar in the `Apostolic Constitutions` where he writes, "But do ye abstain from things offered to idols; for they offer them in honour of demons, that is, to the dishonour of the one God, that ye may not become partakers with demons."[1] For this reason, as is found in a passage from the Clementine Homilies, the Christ-follower is unable to partake of food from the table of pagans because they live "uncleanly." And such a restriction includes the members of one's immediate family and close friends.[2]

Hence, from a wide perspective of extra-canonical texts, the conclusion appears to be unambiguous: the participation in the worship of idols and the eating of idol food is prohibited on the grounds of Yahweh's honour. To do so is to grant honour to the demonic forces which lay behind the idols and to bring shame upon the one true God. To preserve the honour and integrity of God also means to develop an exclusivist pattern of behaviour towards pagan culture which is immersed in the worship of idols/demons.

The above two sections allow a perspective upon the situation confronting Paul in Corinth, and it is to the text of 1 Corinthians that we now turn.

3.4.3 1 Corinthians 8-11:1

In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul begins his discussion of the consumption of sacrificial food.[3] The immediate exegetical problem, and one that has been under debate in recent scholarship, is the meaning of εἰδωλόθυτος (found in 1 Cor 8:1, 4, 7, 10; 10:19[4]). It appears to be a

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[1] 7.2.21, *ANF* 7.469.
[2] Homily XIII, # 4, see Murphy-O'Connor 1978a:553-554.
[3] See esp. Barrett 1971:187-246; Willis 1985; Fee 1987:357-491; P. D. Gooch 1993; Schrage 1995:211-486; Cheung 1999; Thiselton 2000:607-797.
[4] An additional reference is the variant reading at 1 Cor 10:28, supported by some manuscripts. However, the ms. support for ἱερόθυτος is certainly the stronger and since this is a NT hapax, reflecting a non-believers' assessment of idol meat, its presence in the ms. tradition is inexplicable if εἰδωλόθυτος was original. The term

polemical term which arose within the early Christ-movement and is traditionally defined in general terms as meat offered to an idol,[1] or as idol meat sold in the marketplace.[2] More recently, Fee (followed by Witherington) narrows its semantic range considerably when he defines it as sacrificial food specifically eaten "at the cultic meals in the pagan temples."[3] The BAGD entries on θυσία, however, are simply "*the act of offering*" and "*sacrifice, offering*,"[4] and the thorough analyses of P. D. Gooch (1993) and Cheung (1999) conclude that it is much broader than either Fee allows or than traditional scholarship assumed. As noted above, the *type* of food offered to a god could be much wider than the meat of a sacrificial animal and there is nothing in the text of 1 Corinthians 8, nor in the pagan sources, to limit it exclusively to meat. Certainly, Paul's use of κρέας in 8:13 demonstrates that, as P. D. Gooch correctly assesses, "the idol-food Paul has in mind most readily is meat,"[5] but this term cannot be simply retrojected into the rest of the discourse on the assumption that only meat could be idol-food. In 8:13, for example, the possible cause of a brother's fall is βρῶμα—a general term for food (cf. 8:8).[6] Hence, (with Fisk) the most natural reading of εἰδωλόθυτος is "food (formerly) sacrificed to idols."[7]

The social context of Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians 8-11:1 most likely precludes the scenario that members of the Christ-movement were actively participating in cultic rites which the apostle would consider idolatrous (cf. 10:14-22). In view of his urgency elsewhere

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εἰδωλόθυτος is found a further four times in the NT: Acts 15:29; 21:25; Rev 2:14, 20, and also occurs in 4 Macc. 5:2 and *Sib. Or.* 2.96 (although both may represent Christ-movement interpolations; in any case the former probably post-dates the writing of 1 Corinthians—Fee (1987:357, n. 1) uncritically cites 4 Macc. 5:2 in his claim that the term comes from Hellenistic Judaism).

[1] Thrall 1965:61; Schmithals 1971:227; Conzelmann 1975:139ff.; Brunt 1981:29, n. 7; Willis 1985:1; Fisk 1989:56; *NIDNTT* 284.

[2] E.g., Bruce 1971:78; Barrett 1971:188.

[3] 1987:359; and Fee 1980:178. Cf. Witherington 1995:189; Hays 1997:135. Fee's thesis is critiqued by Fisk 1989.

[4] BAGD 366.

[5] 1993:53.

[6] BAGD 148.

[7] 1989:57-58. Cheung (1999:15, n. 1) follows Fisk and P. D. Gooch.

(his repeated attack on idolatry in 1 Cor 6, and that the immoral member of 1 Cor 5 is not only to be removed from the community but is to be "handed over to Satan"), his composure in chapter 8, if this were the case, would be unusual, if not inexplicable.[1] While Paul had, in his previous letter (5:9ff.), clearly urged the Corinthians to have no association with the sexually immoral (by which the Corinthians had assumed, albeit incorrectly, that he meant those outside the congregation), it appears that he had made no mention of idolatry. It is only now (5:10-11) that he refers specifically to idolatry, and presents clarification of his previous advice. That there was ambiguity in Paul's previous admonitions, and that this caused uncertainty and possible disagreement within the community is obvious (and this, of course, is part of the reason why the Corinthians are seeking further advice, 8:1).[2] Nevertheless, one may assume that, consistent with his approach in 5:1-8 and 6:18-20, Paul would certainly demand that the community excludes any member involved in any form of idol worship as part of a pagan meal or feast.

This has probably not yet occurred. However, those claiming γνῶσις, the φυσιοῖ, may have claimed the intellectual and spiritual right to participate in social engagements with relatives, friends, associates, or fraternal organizations where idol-food was present (whether they have actually done so is uncertain).[3] The putative rights claimed by such people may have rested on the numerous points that Paul makes reference to here, that pagan idols had no real existence (8:4-6; 10:19-20); that food was a matter of indifference to God (8:8; 10:23-27, 31); and that participation in baptism and the Lord's Supper was a

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[1] After all, the twin "evils" for NT writers were fornication and idolatry, and these are frequently conjoined in the NT (1 Cor 10:7; Gal 5:19f.; Col 3:5; Acts 15:29; 21:25; 1 Pet 4:3; Rev 2:14, 20).

[2] However, the evidence is not clear enough to allow agreement with Hurd's (1965) thesis on either Paul's vacillation or *volte-face* at this point.

[3] Fee (1980:187-188) correctly point out that "the greater problem to be wrestled with" in 1 Cor 8 is attitudes to γνῶσις; the term and its cognates occurs 9x in the chapter. Certainly, Paul's opening gambit is to declare that γνῶσις "puffs-up" (8:1), a term used previously with a pejorative sense (1 Cor 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2).

safeguard from the effects of idolatry (10:2-14, 20-22). On this reading, Paul's alarm of 8:10-13 is most likely hypothetical—his somewhat muted response to someone apparently causing a fellow believer to be destroyed (8:11, and so "sinning against Christ," 8:12—the single instance of Paul making such a claim!), stands in sharp contrast to his invective elsewhere against those attempting to undermine either his ministry or the faith of other believers.[1] His point may, however, warn of a dangerous future possibility. Indeed, the fact that Paul crafts such an elaborate argument concerning idol-food shows that it was an issue of some concern within the community, and an issue which impinged upon the wider problem of socio-religious boundaries between the Christ-movement and pagan culture.[2]

The examination by P. D. Gooch of the temple precinct of Asklepieion and the nearby dining rooms of Lerna demonstrates a potential scenario which may have presented some ambiguity for the nascent community. Archaeological evidence shows that the Lerna was composed of a large colonnaded courtyard with a fountain at its centre. Its proximity to other recreational buildings (the theatre and gymnasium) and the presence, on its eastern side, of three well-decorated dining rooms (each able to accommodate about a dozen people), suggest that it was a place for public relaxation or recreation. To the north, although positioned outside the courtyard area, lay a stairwell leading up into the temple of Asklepios. It appears that because the dining rooms were not easily accessible from the precinct for priests and other cult officials[3] an unequivocal relationship between the two cannot be established, and, hence, it cannot be determined whether the dining rooms were part of the

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[1] Rom 14:9ff.; 2 Cor 10-13; Gal 1-2; 3:1; 5:2, 9, 12; 1 Thess 1:14ff.; 4:3-8; cf. 1 Tim 1:19-20. That the `weaker` brother (in 8:10) may see another in a Temple or temple precinct does not necessarily imply his presence as part of the social function. As P. D. Gooch makes clear, some Temple eating facilities in Corinth could be seen from the roadside, and the dining rooms associated with the fountain house of Lerna in particular could be seen from the colonnaded square (1993:x, 2, 15-17). See further below.

[2] As Borgen writes, "In 1 Corinthians it is evident that there were persons who were strict in their drawing of the boundary line, and others who on the basis of their spiritual *gnosis* were more lenient..." (1995:47).

[3] So, P. D. Gooch 1993:17, and see the diagrams, pp. x-xi.

Asklepieion.[1] It may well be the case that some of the food prepared and eaten in the dining rooms had no relation to the cult of Asklepios. Such ambiguity flows over into the social-setting of Paul's text. Would participating in a meal at Lerna be equivalent to "reclining in the temple of an idol" (1 Cor 8:10) or "partaking of the table of demons" (1 Cor 10:21). As Gooch concludes: "[some] might find the dining rooms of Lerna too strongly associated with the sanctuary of Asklepios. Yet the ambiguity...would provide support to any Christians who found it desirable to eat there and wished to defend the practice. Even if there was unanimity concerning the wrongfulness of sharing in the table of demons...the dining rooms of Lerna would present an awkward case."[2]

Honour in the Community

The social restrictions resulting from Paul's admonitions in 1 Cor 8-11:1 would have been quite severe for many of the Corinthian Christ-followers. Indeed, abstinence from any food known to be idol-food may have required some to experience the equivalent of "going out of the world" (1 Cor 5:10). To avoid even nominally tainted meals perhaps meant instances of keeping an awkward and uncomfortable distance from family, friends and associates. As is evidenced from the above, it would be entirely reasonable to suggest that the Greco-Roman believers, especially the neophytes, may still have been given frequent invitations to a variety of socio-religious functions at which the consumption of idol-food would have been expected. Such would have been their experience before conversion and

[1] The conclusions of the excavation report by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (cited extensively in P. D. Gooch 1993) concludes that the dining rooms of Lerna probably played no official or cultic role in the Asklepieion (P. D. Gooch 1993:17). This relationship between the Asklepieion and Lerna in Corinth is not unique but is found among various other Asklepieia (see P. D. Gooch 1993:17-24).
[2] 1993:25.

perhaps remained so for some time afterwards. Shared meals were, after all, the prime means of maintaining social relationships, and, as idol-food was associated with most occasions of social significance, the scenarios outlined by Paul in 1 Cor 8-11:1 could not be avoided. For those converts who desired to retain their former public and social life in the city, Paul's restrictions were perhaps thought unacceptable, and a degree of compromise may have seemed the best option. Certainly, some may have perceived that an element of compromise was inevitable—opportunities for upward mobility would have been seriously curtailed otherwise. As P. D. Gooch writes,

> To refuse to accept food presented at a meal, to raise questions beforehand, and to refuse food commonly eaten by virtually all other persons in that society would mark Christians as odd and repugnant. It would not be possible to maintain social relationships with those outside the Christian circle without major adjustment and the serious possibility of misunderstanding and hostility. (1993:46)[1]

More seriously for Paul at Corinth, it appears that while the "strong" may have been accepting at least some of the social engagements, the weak were not; and this may have been a further cause of internal strife and quarrelling within the community. The action of the "strong" was further exacerbating the position taken by the weak, for the "strong's" acceptance of certain social engagements meant that it was difficult for the weak to adequately explain their refusal to participate whilst other members of their own congregation were actively engaging in similar social activities. The action of the "strong," as Murphy-O'Connor explains, placed the weak "on the horns of a dilemma."[2] And Paul's concern is that the weak, in their attempt to emulate the "wisdom" of the "strong," may be

[1] Cf. Witherington 1995:196; Horrell 1995a:652.
[2] 1978a:554.

drawn back into the powerful world of the pagan cult, which was, one must always bear in mind, the dominant symbolic world in which the Corinthian believers lived.

While Paul's instructions would certainly help the cause of the weak, they would, at the same time, significantly curtail the ability of the "strong" to sustain their social positions and the status and honour that went with them. The radicality of Paul's instructions should not be underestimated within the social context of an honour-shame culture. That the pressure of social conformity upon converted pagans was considerable is further evidenced in the book of Revelation where, even decades after the time of Paul, there are active members of the Christ-movement involved in the polytheistic cults of their wider local communities (Rev 2:14f., 20). And the sharp polemic of John against the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira does not disguise the fact that these Christ-followers obviously believed such compromises to be entirely acceptable.[1]

Paul's final remarks in 1 Cor 10:14-22 present a stark choice for the Corinthian φυσιοῖ, "You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons" (10:21). The apostle sees that each creates a relation of κοινωνία between the participants and the deity honoured in the meal. Once this point is granted his argument becomes indisputable, for the God who demands exclusive allegiance will not tolerate cultic eating that establishes a bond with any other god(s) or powers. The two options are mutually exclusive and the latter is incompatible with life in Christ. Moreover, the current situation is critical for the Corinthians, and Paul serves an urgent warning: anyone who participates in meals alongside pagans engaged in idolatrous activity shares in the worship of demons and runs the risk of provoking the Lord to jealousy. As Paul makes perfectly clear, the idolatrous action of the Wilderness generation provides a typological example of the divine wrath and destruction

[1] See Borgen 1995.

which may fall upon the Corinthian congregation.[1] But the basis of Paul's prohibition ("Flee idolatry") is also concerned with his understanding, based on the OT, of idolatry as the locus of the demonic.[2] The use of Dt 32, which is foremost in Paul's thought, provides him with all the basic ingredients of the demonology outlined in 1 Cor 8-10: an idol may be considered by some to be "no god" (v. 21), yet these are "foreign gods" which make the One God jealous (v. 16), and, consequently, sacrifices to them are deemed sacrifices to demons (v. 16). Hence, the `nothingness` of pagan gods does not deny their reality, but places them in contrast to the honour and glory of Yahweh.

3.4.4 Summary

From the above study, it is evident that the matrix of honour-shame played a significant and perhaps central role in the problems outlined in 1 Corinthians 8-11:1. The social pressure to conform to normative cultural practice meant that the vast majority of citizens would have had some involvement with civic sacrifices and feasts. For the civic elite in particular, a vital element in the pursuit of greater honour was the desire and determination to have some *central* involvement in such events; and the same could be said of participation in certain social occasions and festivities held within a temple precinct or in a private home. But such attitudes are not to be linked exclusively to the elite, for active involvement in the norms of social intercourse—most of which was done around the dining

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[1] See Horrell 1997:97. Paul's typology may also have sprung to mind due to the motif of "rebellion" ascribed to the Wilderness generation—against Yahweh, against their leaders (Moses and Aaron), and against each other. It provides a further typological example of the current factionalism within the Corinthian congregation and of certain attitudes towards the apostle himself.

[2] On the existence of demons and spirits, Dt 18.11; Isa 8.19; 19.3; on pagan worship as offered to demons, Dt 32:17; Pss 95:5 (LXX); 106:37; Isa 65:11 (LXX); Rev 9:20; Bar 4:7; *1 En.* 19:1; 99:7; *Jub.* 1:11; 22:17.

table—was a vital prerequisite for *all* those seeking to attain greater prestige and status.[1] It is only to be expected, therefore, that there were some (or many) within the Corinthian congregation who wished to maintain the social status-quo, or who attempted to justify any potential involvement in sacrifices and feasts, and who rejected the "interference" by others within the congregation (or by Paul himself). In effect, the "strong" were seeking to work out some rational compromise on the matter.

Paul's response to the "strong" in these chapters is as subtle as it is radical. His apparent agreement in with them in 8:4-6 only serves to mask what will become a two-stage argument *against* the eating of idol food.[2] The first stage is a gentle appeal to Christ-centred brotherhood—the "strong" need to demonstrate more consideration to the weak for not only may their consciences be wounded and defiled, but they themselves may be ultimately "destroyed." These are, after all, their brothers for whom Christ died, and so sinning against them is analogous to sinning against Christ (8:12). This point alone may well have caused feelings of guilt and shame. The second stage, the eventual prohibition of knowingly eating idol food (10:14-22), is grounded in an extensive catalogue of Paul's self-denial of apostolic rights (9:1-23), together with warnings from Israel's history of the severe repercussions of idolatrous behaviour (10:1-13). Taken together, Paul's attitude is clear: the eating of idol food is both unloving and idolatrous; it has the potential both to destroy the weaker brother

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[1] Following Theissen's (1982) thesis, it has become fashionable to see the "strong" as of higher social status. It is perhaps true, as Barclay (1992:68) maintains, that "...those deeply enmeshed in the social networks of Corinthian life at a higher level would certainly have a lot to lose if they adopted too sectarian a mentality." Nevertheless, it is also often true that those of high social status have more that they can afford to lose. Moreover, as both Meeks and Barclay realize, there is no necessary straightforward correlation between social status and sectarian perspectives—the picture is much more complex and requires many qualifications. From the internal evidence of 1 Corinthians, the potential eating of idol food appears to be as accessible to the weak as to the "strong." After all, Paul's concern for the weak's imitation of the "strong" in eating εἰδωλόθυτος makes little sense if the opportunities for the weak are really so limited. For a critique of Theissen's works see Meggitt 1994, 1998.

[2] P. D. Gooch (1993:83) calls this Paul's "strategy of persuasion."

and to bring God's wrath upon oneself and the congregation.[1] The apostle's instructions need not be seen as inconsistent,[2] for as Cheung maintains, the two arguments are not mutually exclusive but are "mutually reinforcing in their prohibition of the consumption of idol food."[3]

The radicality of Paul's instructions is profound, for with regard to relationships within the community, his judgment is that the "strong" should not only bear with the feelings of the weak but actually change their own lifestyle because of them! Such an opinion shatters the normative rules of the honour "game." It presents an equality of status which in effect shames the "strong," and it establishes a new code of honour for the Corinthian community. The call to a more rigorously exclusive symbolic world is in effect a presentation of a new world-view. With regard to relationships outwith the community, the consequences on a total prohibition of involvement in cultic meals would have been severe. Misunderstanding, ostracism, and possible hostility would undoubtedly follow. In many cases one's livelihood may well be put in jeopardy; and for those higher-status Christ-followers who declined attendance at meals in temples, their place in the social hierarchy would have been seriously affected.[4] After all, given the belief that citizens should worship the gods of the city, such an attitude would be akin to an implicit renunciation of citizenship. C. K. Barrett sums up the social repercussions, "Refusal to eat food sacrificed to idols would lead one into a self-imposed ghetto; this, it appears is what the Jews did and the Jewish Christians, and what most Christians eventually did."[5]

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[1] See P. D. Gooch 1993:75-76, 83-84; Cheung 1999:297.
[2] So P. D. Gooch 1993:87 and Fee 1987:362f., esp. 363, n. 23.
[3] 1999:96.
[4] P. D. Gooch 1993:104-107; Witherington 1995:175-176.
[5] 1982a:50. Similarly, P. D. Gooch 1993:132.

In the end, it is the ceaseless desire for honour that disturbs Paul the most, for it offends most directly the gospel of the cross. The "strong" care more for the honour of participation in cultic sacrifices or eating fine meals with pagan friends than with offending the consciences of the weaker members of the congregation. On a superficial level, the problem here is related to idol food; but at a deeper and more profound level it is to do with a misunderstanding of the gospel—the gospel of Christ crucified. Paul invokes the symbol of Christ's death in 8:11 in order to remind the "strong" of the common basis of community life. The cross alone is the foundational symbol of radical Christ-centred praxis and must be the defining symbol and the basis of loving relationships. The striving for honour and status remains a cultural straightjacket which serves only to undermine the young community, whereas the cross symbolizes and informs the profound ontological reality of their unity in Christ. The symbol of Christ's death *for them all* should determine how the members of this community should behave toward one another.[1] If Christ's death is the ground of the believer's mutual responsibility to one another, then what is symbolized by that death also defines the nature of one's obligation to the other members of the community.[2]

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[1] Cf. Geertz 1973:127-141. According to Geertz, one of the primary functions of sacred symbols, such as the cross, is to relate an ontology to a morality.

[2] See Meeks 1986:136.

Chapter 4

PROBLEMS OF WORSHIP AND BELIEF: 1 CORINTHIANS 11-15

4.1 1 Corinthians 11:2-16[1]

This section of Paul's letter presents the modern reader with a clear illustration of how significant and determinative the matrix of honour-shame was in first-century Greco-Roman culture.[2] But, although the passage is replete with honour-shame terminology, the terseness and ambiguity of Paul's injunctions, especially their relevance within the wider social context, leave the exegete with numerous imponderables. The central problem of the text, and what this section will be attempting to prove, is how and in what way(s), male and female head-coverings impinge directly upon notions of honour and shame. But questions abound, too, as to the precise nuance of κεφαλή (vv. 3-7) and ἐξουσία (v. 10); to the meaning of κατὰ κεφαλῆς (v. 4); and to the relevance and import of the ἄγγελλοι in verse 10. And even the specific liturgical setting of the passage has now been brought into question following H. R. Holmyard's recent critique of the "traditionally assumed" locale to be found ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ (1997). So although the centrality of honour and shame in this passage is clear, caution needs to be exercised in many of the exegetical points of debate.

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[1] For reasons of space this section will deal only with the issue of veils/head-coverings and not hair styles/hair length. The arguments pointing towards the former are more cogent, see Balsdon 1960; Oster 1988:485-86; Fee 1987:496, 506-7, 528-29; Keener 2000. Those who see the issue here to be one of veils/head-coverings include, Theissen 1987; Engberg-Pederson 1991; Dunn 1995:70; D. B. Martin 1995:233; Witherington 1995; Horrell 1996:170; and Watson 2000. The church Fathers almost unanimously took Paul's words here to refer to veiling and unveiling: Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.8.2; Clem. Al. *Paed.* 3.11; Tert. *Cor.* ch. 14; *Or.* chs. 21-22; *Marc.* 5.9; *Cult. fem.* 2.7; *Virg.*; August. *Ep.* CCXLV; Jerome *Ep.* CXL VII.5. On the debate see esp. Thiselton 2000:823-826.

[2] The Pauline authorship of this passage, together with its literary integrity, is well-defended. See Murphy-O'Connor 1976, 1988; Fee 1987:492, n. 3; Witherington 1988:78-80; 1995:231, n. 2; Schrage 1995:496-97; Horrell 1996:168-169; Thiselton 2000:806.

A useful starting point will be an examination of the relevant Greco-Roman and Hebrew-Judean social contexts, where the focus will be upon the head attire of men and women in both public and private liturgical settings.[1]

4.1.1 The Greco-Roman Context

The wearing of suitable apparel by men and women within Greco-Roman first-century CE culture was wholly immersed within considerations of honour and status, and so was of prime import to most. Indeed, one's attire often gave the clearest and most highly visible indication of social rank.[2] It appears that in a public (non-liturgical) setting, the conventional head-covering for the Roman male, irrespective of status, was the drawing of the upper part of the garment or toga over the head until it approached or covered the ears. But this was by no means strictly adhered to. A simple aside by Plutarch in his discussion of male public head-coverings ("...if they *happen* to have the toga over the head...") demonstrates that there was some freedom in male public attire,[3] and he later asserts that it was more usual for men to go uncovered (the reasons for which will be articulated below).[4]

As for women, the evidence, too, is slight, but it would appear that when women ventured outside the home,[5] they would normally wear a veil or a hood.[1] Valerius Maximus

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[1] On the limitations of archaeological and literary evidence, Wallace-Hadrill 1994:6-7; Laurence 1997:9-10, 13-14; on the problems of distinguishing private and public space, Wallace-Hadrill 1994:10-12; Berry 1997; George 1997; and esp. Grahame 1997.

[2] Oster 1988:493; Gill 1990:248, 250.

[3] *Mor.* 266C-E (italics, mine).

[4] *Mor.* 267A-B. Oster (1988) rightly critiques Fee's unwarranted assertion that there is "almost no evidence (paintings, reliefs, statuary, etc.) that men in any of the cultures (Greek, Roman, Jew) covered their heads...In the final analysis...we simply have to admit that we do not know, in any case, it is hypothetical whatever it was" (1987:505-8).

[5] Women were typically restricted to the home, see Dio. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.21.2; 8.39.1; Livy *Hist.* 34.1.5; 34.2.9-10; 34.3.1-3; 34.4.18; 34.5.7-10; Plut. *Bride* 9, *Mor.* 139C; 30-32, *Mor.* 142CD; Gould 1980:47; Dover 1984:145; Keener 2000:443; Kroeger 2000.

describes how Sulpicius Gallus (consul in 166 BCE) divorced his wife due to her appearing uncovered in public,[2] and Plutarch maintains that it "is more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered."[3] This is confirmed by Dio Chrysostom who writes of "...the convention regarding feminine attire, a convention which prescribes that women should be so arrayed and should so deport themselves when in the street that nobody could see any part of them, neither of the face nor of the rest of the body...they have their faces covered as they walk."[4] Even in the second-century CE, Pliny was said to be glad that his wife came to hear him give public recitations of his works, "...with an eager ear hidden behind a curtain,"[5] and Clement draws attention to the (mis)use of purple veils that attracted rather than deflected the gaze of strangers.[6] In the romances, a groom was said to be the first man to gaze on a modest virgin's face.[7] For women to have an uncovered head in public otherwise was conventionally seen as a sign of public shaming and humiliation. It was a symbol associated with masculinity, lesbianism, adultery, or prostitution.[8] In short (and see further below), the wearing of the veil/head-covering said something explicit about the wife's position in society.

Considerations of normative *male* head-coverings within a *public liturgical setting* are quite different for here the archaeological and literary evidence is unmistakably clear.

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[1] See Chariton *Chaer.* 1.13.11; Petron. *Sat.* 14, 16; MacMullen 1980:209, esp. n. 4; 1990:144; Rouselle 1992:315; Keener 2000. Some statues do show unveiled women (Keener 1993:585), but locating the social-setting of which they purport to demonstrate is fraught with difficulty. On veils, see esp. Hom. *Od.* 1.332-33; 16.416; 18.210; 21.65.

[2] 6.3.10. Cf. Sall. *Hist.* 13.45.

[3] *Mor.* 267A-B.

[4] *Or.* 33.48-49.

[5] *Ep.* 4.19.

[6] *Paed.* 2.114.4. A primary reason for female head-coverings in the ancient Mediterranean world may have been because of male lust; Apuleius *Met.* 2.8-9; Sus. 13.32; *Sifre* Num 11.2.3; Keener 1993:585; 2000:445-446 (and texts cited there); Watson 2000a:40-89.

[7] Chariton *Chaer.* 1.1.4-6; *Jos. and Asen.* 15.1-2; 18.6.

[8] On masculinity, Lucian *Fug.* 27; Apul. *Met.* 6; on lesbianism, Lucian *Dial. Meretr.* 290-291; on adultery, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 64.3; on prostitution, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 64.3; Philo *Spec.* 3.51; cf. the Gospel tradition associating uncovered long hair with an adulterer/prostitute, Lk 7:36-50; Jn 11:2; 12:3.

The Roman ethos was one in which the head was always covered.[1] Such attire was seen as an aid to religious devotion and piety—a point confirmed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus when he states that a suitable head-covering was the custom "on the occasion of every prayer."[2] The archaeological evidence detailed in the works of Oster (1988, 1992), Thompson (1988), and Gill (1990) demonstrates not only the widespread use of male liturgical head coverings in Rome, throughout Italy, and in numerous cities in the Roman East, but also that this Roman custom can be documented for several generations before and after the advent of Christ-followers in Corinth. Some of the finest archaeological examples are those of the emperors themselves. The sculpture of Augustus in Corinth, the magnificent Augustan monument *Ara Pacis Augustae* (Altar of Augustan Peace) in Rome, the fragmentary statue of Nero in Corinth, and the Column of Trajan all incorporate the pious gesture of the covered head.[3] Neither are these unique. About twenty similar statues have been discovered of Augustus alone, each depicting him with suitable head-covering sacrificing to the gods, and similar images are found on Roman coins of the period.[4] Hence, it should come as no surprise to discover that within the excavations of Corinth several images of men have been discovered each incorporating this same liturgical head-covering.[5]

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[1] Contra Murphy-O'Connor (1988:267) who claims that in a liturgical setting some men may have been uncovered. He writes, "Greeks and Romans differed in their attitude toward attire at prayer, as may be inferred from Plutarch's question, "Why is it that when they [the Romans] worship the gods, they cover their heads?" The question would be meaningless unless the Greeks prayed bareheaded, and this is confirmed by Apuleius' description of the Isis ceremony at Cenchreae: "The women had their hair anointed and their heads covered with light linen, but the men had their crowns shaven and shining bright."" However, Murphy-O'Connor's exegesis is disingenuous here. Firstly, he quotes only the first half of Plutarch's question. Had he quoted the full text (*Mor.* 266C) one would see that Plutarch is simply asking the question as to why Romans do not cover the head in certain social situations—he is making no distinction between Romans and Greeks at this point. Secondly, the Apuleius' text (*Met.* 11.10) refers to a particular ceremony of *initiates* of the Isis cult. It can tell us little of normative use of head-coverings within the cult, nor of how this may have a bearing on Greco-Roman worship.

[2] *Ant. Rom.* 12.16.3; cf. 15.9.2; Ovid *Met.* 3.198; Keener 2000:444.

[3] Ridgway 1981:432f.; Gill 1990; Oster 1992.

[4] Oster 1988:504.

[5] Gill 1990:246.

Oster writes, "This evidence of the material culture patently demonstrates that the practice of men covering their heads in the context of prayer and prophecy was a common pattern of Roman piety and widespread during the late Republic and early Empire."[1]

The literary evidence supports the above view. In addition to the quote of Dionysius of Halicarnassus cited above, Livy, Plutarch and Lucretius all make reference to male public head-coverings in liturgical settings.[2] Of particular interest is a passage in the *Aeneid* where Virgil details the instructions given by the prophet Helenus regarding devotional acts for Roman seafaring adventurers, "Moreover, when the ships have crossed the seas and anchored, and when now thou raisest altars and payest vows on the shore, veil thy hair with coverings of purple robe, that in the worship of the gods no hostile face may intrude amid the holy fires and mar the omens. This mode of sacrifice do thou keep, thou and thy company; by this observance let thy children's children in purity stand fast."[3] Plainly, in the opinion of Virgil the veil was a matter of *lex sacra* ("sacred law") for pious Romans and could only be ignored at the expense of offending the Roman gods (see p. 38, n. 3). Indeed, the *flamen dialis*, a Roman sacerdotal official, was not even allowed out of his home without a suitable head-covering.[4]

For *women* and *liturgical head-coverings*, the ancient data is more ambiguous. A head-covering *may* have been customary at religious functions,[5] they were certainly expected of those women involved in any sacerdotal functions,[6] the Vestal Virgins for

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[1] 1992:69.
[2] Livy 10.7.10; Plutarch *Mor.* 266C; Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 5.1198-1200.
[3] 3.403-9. Cf. *Aen.* 3.543-7; 1.385.
[4] So, Aulius Gellius *Noct. Att.*10.15.16f., who points out that it is only recently that the dialis was allowed to be uncovered *inside* his own home.
[5] See Ovid *Met.* 1.398; Plut. *Rom.* 10, *Mor.* 266C; Keener 2000:444.
[6] Varro *Ling.* 5.29.130; Gell. *Noct. Att.* 10.15.26-30.

example were typically covered,[1] and this was also the case for any noble women involved in sacrifice.[2] But the frieze of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, whilst depicting a number of veiled women fulfilling some kind of religious role (most likely Vestal Virgins), also depicts many other women who were clearly uncovered.[3] So, in certain public liturgical settings head-coverings may have been optional for women. There were, of course, certain occasions when specific head attire was expected; special head-coverings were required of Roman brides, for example—marriages being an overtly religious ceremony.[4] And, conversely, women uncovered their heads publicly when in mourning (the typical mourning rite for Roman women was to unbind the hair, while for Greek women it was to cut the hair short). This is described by Plutarch,

> Why do they [Roman males] cover their heads when they escort their parents to the grave, while daughters go with uncovered heads and hair unbound? Is it because fathers should be honoured as gods by their male offspring, but mourned as dead by their daughters, that custom has assigned to each sex its proper part and has produced a fitting result from both? Or is it that the unusual is proper in mourning, and it is more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered and men with their heads uncovered? So in Greece, whenever any misfortune comes, the women cut off their hair and the men let it grow, for it is usual for men to have their hair cut and for women to let it grow. (*Mor.* 267A-B[5])

An additional liturgical setting is that of household worship, for the main religious activity in antiquity centred on the home.[6] The hearth was the focal point for the domestic cult and small daily food offerings and prayers were made there to a variety of deities

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[1] Oster 1988:496.
[2] Juv. *Sat.* 6.390-392.
[3] See Gill 1990:252.
[4] Thompson 1988.
[5] See also Thompson 1988:104, 112. On mourning see Keener 2000:443-444.
[6] Cic. *Dom.* 109; *Off.* 1.54-55; Sandnes 1997.

(typically Hestia for the Greeks, Vesta, for the Romans, but a number of other gods too).[1] The hearth was also the place to offer a libation, a formal ceremony of wine poured out in honour of the gods.[2] By way of such acts the family afforded itself of the protection and prosperity of the gods and hence the domestic cult was, in many ways, distinct in focus from public and state cults. Other gods of the household, particularly the *Lares* (most likely deified spirits of dead ancestors), were worshipped and these were represented by small statues or paintings.[3] Archaeological research has uncovered numerous household shrines to the *Lares* in niches in dining-rooms or kitchens, or as separate shrines in the atria or gardens.[4] The male head of the household, the *paterfamilias*, functioned as a priest for the family and the cult was intimately linked to his own honour and prosperity.[5] According to Roman *patria potestas*, the *paterfamilias* controlled all the other members of the family and assumed accountability for their behaviour, even holding the power of life and death over the wider family (children, slaves, freedmen and foster-children).[6] Conversely, the *paterfamilias* may be punished for the misdemeanours of his family.[7] It is certain that, as the *paterfamilias* functioned as a priest within the domestic cult, he would have employed a head-covering (as the quote by Plutarch notes, below). This would have distinguished him socially and religiously and denoted a sense of social importance and superiority. Conversely, the wife may well have remained uncovered amongst kin within the home

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[1] Plut. *Mor.* 703D; Theophr. In Porph. *Abst.* 2.20; Plautus *Aul.* 1-27. *Merc.* 830-7; Hor. *Carm.* 3.23; Prudentius *Ad Symmachum* 1.197-211; Barclay 1997; Aune 2000.
[2] Hesiod *Op.* 722-24.
[3] See Hor. *Odes* 3.22.
[4] Orr 1978 (illustrated); P. D. Gooch 1993:29-38; J. R. Clarke 1991.
[5] So, Barclay 1997:67; on the role and function of the *paterfamilias*, Lassen 1997.
[6] Only the *paterfamilias* was recognized as a full person in the eyes of Roman law and society, see Kroeger 1993; Joubert 1995.
[7] See the *Shepherd of Hermas* (*Similitudes* 7.3).

during times of domestic worship, wearing a veil only if there were outsiders (i.e., non-kin) present.

In summarizing the above, it would appear that, with respect to *public non-liturgical* head-coverings, the available evidence relating to men is unclear, whereas for women the expectation was that they were to be covered. With respect to *liturgical* head-coverings for men, the weight of evidence points more certainly to the fact that they were expected to be covered, but for women there may have been an element of choice.[1] For the man, what we have yet to ascertain is the specific reason for head-coverings in particular settings, but this is provided for us by Plutarch,

> Why is it that when they [Romans] worship the gods, they cover their heads, but when they meet any of their fellow-men worthy of honour, if they happen to have the toga over the head, they uncover?...For they uncover their heads in the presence of men more influential than they: it is not to invest these men with additional honour, but rather to avert from them the jealousy[2] of the gods, that these men may not seem to demand the same honour as the gods, nor to tolerate an attention like that bestowed on the gods, nor to rejoice therein. But they thus worshipped the gods, either humbling themselves by concealing the head, or rather by pulling the toga over their ears as a precaution lest any ill-omened and baleful sound from without should reach them while they were praying. Or, as Castor states...the Spirit within us entreats and supplicates the gods without, and thus he symbolizes by the covering of the head the covering and concealment of the soul by the body. (*Mor.* 266C-E)

The issue is one of honour. The man's head-covering is a sign of self-abasement, of humble concealment before his god, and of appropriate deference toward a deity of superlative honour. It also acts as a necessary safeguard when in prayer—a suitable aid in maintaining a singularity of focus. It stands, therefore, as a visible symbol of reverence, tribute, and

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[1] Contra Gundry-Volf 1997:151, n. 1.
[2] Φθόνος; LSJ *sv*, ill-will, envy, jealousy.

respect to one's god, all of which falls within the matrix of honour-shame. To wear this same symbol of honour before one's social superior would be to bring dishonour to the god for whom it is designed and the consequence may be to provoke a measure of divine jealousy (even a degree of divine wrath) upon the other party.[1] The uncovering *acknowledges* the presence of other people worthy of honour but places this within a hierarchical system of honour, wherein the honour of the god(s) is paramount. Here, one observes that the covering or uncovering of the head, in both a public and liturgical setting, is an action made wholly within the social constraints of honour-shame and that these are of vital import even in the minutiae of everyday life.

These same constraints act, albeit with different manifestations, on the attire of women. The work of Rousselle and D. Martin demonstrates that for the reputable Roman woman the head-covering served to protect her dignity and status, signifying a woman not to be propositioned. Rousselle, in particular, claims that in the case of respected and respectable women, "although the veil was a symbol of subjection, it was also the badge of honour, of sexual reserve, and hence of mastery of the self. A veil or hood constituted a warning: it signified that the wearer was a respectable woman and that no man dare approach without risking...penalties."[2] Hence, the attire of the woman had an impact on the honour of the men to whom she was related.

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[1] On honour as a 'limited good,' see pp. 23-24.
[2] Rousselle 1992:315; cf. D. B. Martin 1995:229-249.

4.1.2 The Hebrew-Judean Context

The Hebrew-Judean context for both men and women is much clearer. The OT delivers numerous explicit stipulations regarding the head-coverings for the Levitical priesthood, but there are also a small number of texts which refer to the head-coverings of both men and women.[1] The head-coverings required of the priesthood are unambiguous: every priest was expected to wear a headdress of fine linen—and the high priest was expected to wear his head-covering continually.[2] (The Mishna appears to embody this same tradition in its own description of priestly attire.[3]) The uncovering of the head by a priest or high priest was done only in exceptional circumstances such as disaster or bereavement.[4] With regard to head-coverings for (non-priestly) men and women, the evidence of the OT suggests that a man was also covered,[5] and that the normal attire for women in public (i.e., in situations where the woman may encounter male strangers), was the wearing of a veil.[6] As in the Greco-Roman context, it is a likely assumption that women did not wear a veil at home amongst kin. The public removal of the woman's veil was done for particular situations involving scandal (or the suggestion of scandal), and such an action would have brought shame both upon the woman and her family.[7] (In particular circumstances the hair

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[1] See esp. Keener 2000.
[2] Ex 28:4, 37-38; 39:28; Lev 16:4; 21:10 LXX; Ezek 44:18; Zech 3:5.
[3] *m.* Yom. 7.5.
[4] Lev 10:6 LXX; Ezek 24:17 LXX.
[5] Lev 13:45 LXX; Dan 3:21; cf. Job 29:14.
[6] Gen 24:65; 38:14, 19; SS 4:1, 3; 6:7; *m.* Ket. 7.6; Tomson 1990:133; Stansell 2002:6. This is contra Murphy-O'Connor (1980:488) who writes, "Both men and women wore a turban which, when unwound, uncovered the head." Murphy-O'Connor presents no evidence of women wearing turbans. Unmarried Judean women may not have been expected to cover their heads (Jdt 8.2-7; 10.7; 11.21).
[7] Num 5:18 LXX; Isa 3:19, 47:2; Ezek 13:21; Sus. 32. Thompson (1988:104) is misleading when she writes: "Paul, with his Jewish background, would have experienced no conflict at men's bareheadedness in prayer; the custom of head-covering by Jewish men, seen in its minimal form in the yarmulke (skull cap) worn by men of the modern orthodox faith, did not develop until long after Paul's time." She presents no evidence for this assertion and simply maintains that because the yarmulke was a later tradition, the Judeans of Paul's day would have been bareheaded. Her evidence takes no account of texts in the OT or the Mishna. Gill (1990:251) employs Thompson's statements uncritically.

may also have been shaved and this was a cause of extreme public disgrace.[1]) A woman having unbound hair was considered to demonstrate a lack of good breeding, if not low conduct, and the physical act of someone loosening a woman's hair publicly was considered an act of violence against her and subject to a fine.[2] Any crossover of sexual identity would have been an abomination for an Israelite according to Dt 22:5.

4.1.3 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and the Priority of Honour

The above section has demonstrated the vital importance attached to public appearance in the first-century Greco-Roman world. Such appearance, especially attire, existed (and still does) as a powerful semiotic system generating symbols of status, wealth, style, modesty, self-respect, and self-promotion. Indeed, the head and face stood as a symbolic replication of the social value of honour and dishonour and were displayed as such when the head was crowned, anointed, touched, covered, struck, or slapped.[3] But awareness of such cultural forces still does not make exegesis of this text easy. The traditional view is that this section is so enigmatic that its original meaning is beyond recovery, and this has led to a proliferation of theories and suggested backgrounds. Certainly, as Thiselton rightly points out, there are "multilayered metaphorical and cultural nuances which exclude any understanding of language in these verses in terms of lexicography *alone*,"[4] for the logic of Paul's directives rely upon unspoken and undefended assumptions about what is honourable or shameful for men and women in first-century culture. Hence the matrix of honour-shame will be foremost in mind during exegesis of the text.

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[1] See *T. Job* 23-25 (esp. 24.10); Ilan 1997:156-157.
[2] *m.* B.K. 8.6, see Montefiore/Loewe 1938:108.
[3] Hanson/Oakman 1998:70; cf. C. A. Barton 2001:56-58, 74, 79-80.
[4] 2000:801 (italics mine).

From a social-scientific perspective what is most intriguing about this text is not so much the debate over head-coverings but the question of why, following Paul's departure from Corinth, members of the community began to make certain changes to their appearance which ran contrary to Paul's expectations. And an analysis of this kind must begin with the fact that Paul not only established the community at Corinth, and presumably with it a core understanding of its central belief system, but remained a part of the community for some long time. According to Acts this was some eighteen months (Acts 18:11); a figure which is widely accepted and which fits well into what is known of Pauline chronology.[1] Presumably, then, Paul would have taken a central and pivotal role in the nascent community's liturgical experiences, and would have done so over the long tenure of his stay there. With this in mind, there are two points to consider. Firstly, it is most unlikely that Paul's insistence upon appropriate head-coverings was an assertion originally made within the confines of this letter. If this was the proper attire expected by Paul in worship then it is likely to have been formulated during his time there, perhaps even as an initial expectation of liturgical dress at the founding of the community. But the above evidence relating to Greco-Roman and Judean head-coverings in liturgical settings for men (both in public and at home) would appear to suggest that head-coverings were the norm[2] If so, why does Paul deviate from this, and why only for men and not for women too? Secondly, if this was the normal expectation of Paul for proper attire in liturgical settings (and one may assume that he would have given adequate justification for this divergence from normative cultural practice), why, following

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[1] Barrett 1971:4-5; Jewett 1979:22, 55, 58, 97; Lüdemann 1984:8, 158-159, 178; Fee 1987:6; Alexander 1993:115-123; Thiselton 2000:29-32.

[2] All of the available evidence runs against Hays' claim (1997:186) that, "It was not the normal custom in Greek and Roman cultures to be veiled; thus, it is hard to see how their being unveiled in worship could be regarded as controversial or shameful." It also runs against Watson's claim (2000:526) that, "...at Corinth the [women's] head-covering is not traditional but an innovation that Paul only now seeks to impose."

his departure, have the men of the community decided to do the exact *opposite* of what the apostle obviously considered the new norm?[1]

There is an additional dimension to take into consideration—that of the fictive kinship of believers drawn together as the new household of God.[2] The gospel proclamation goes out to and is embraced by individuals who are bound together in a new and distinct metaphorical family; they are ἀδελφοί in Christ, and so children of God.[3] Paul can even envisage himself in a paternal role and refers to the Corinthian believers as his "beloved children" and to himself as their father (1 Cor 4:14-15; cf. 2 Cor 12:14-15). Certainly, Jesus' call to radical discipleship as outlined in the Gospel traditions explicitly sanctioned the relativisation of kinship and household ties,[4] so that allegiance to Christ and God superseded those of family or other kin-groups (as it did amongst the Judeans). In this context, Paul can encourage Christ-followers to take the radical step of considering that their commitment to Christ and the demands of his mission might require them both to forego family commitments and to forge alternative 'kinship' relations with fellow believers outside the family circle.[5] Here, the use of family imagery to create a new and distinct identity for his congregations creates a clear boundary from that of the dominant groups outside.[6]

The matrix of honour-shame may be beneficially used to elucidate a number of the above points. If the Greco-Roman norm for men in both a public or domestic liturgical context was to cover the head—as a gesture of deference and self-abasement before a pagan

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[1] Contra Watson 2000a:42, who sees the uncovered female head as the "established tradition at Corinth." Rather, the tradition established by Paul would have been the *covered* female head.
[2] See Joubert 1995; Barclay 1997.
[3] Aasgaard 1997. 1 Corinthians has by far the most references to believers as ἀδελφοί (39x; compared to 19x in Romans, 12x in 2 Cor, 11x in Gal, 9x in Phil, 19x in 1 Thess).
[4] So, S. C. Barton 1997.
[5] See S. C. Barton 1994; Moxnes 1994; Barclay 1997; Esler 1997; cf. Eph 3:14-15; 1 Tim 3:15.
[6] Although, as the case of Onesimus demonstrates, it did not necessarily follow that all of the members of a household were fellow-believers.

god (behind which Paul had already revealed lay demons, 1 Cor 10:20-21), perhaps the apostle recognized that a demonstrable change in worship attire was necessary. After all, the symbolism of the covering of the head during pagan sacrifice, for both men and women, was a very familiar one, and the head-covering was used specifically as a visible sign of bringing honour to one's (pagan) god. In this light, the men of the community may have been encouraged by Paul to leave the tradition of the covered-head behind.

But, following Paul's departure, the entry into the community of Greco-Roman male neophytes who were used to covering the head in a liturgical setting may have persuaded some of the Corinthian men to revert to this previous tradition. As seen, it appears that the male head-covering was a vital (and highly visible) part of the ethos of Roman piety and devotion which had stood for generations, and, with Paul absent, the male neophytes may have encountered little objection.[1] So, too, higher-status neophytes, especially those functioning as *patresfamilias* may have wanted to assert some kind of social superiority and importance within the community and hence remained with covered head.[2] Such an attitude may have encouraged others to do likewise. The significant point here is that in traditional Roman thinking the male head-covering was worn to bring honour to one's god and, hence, it should be of little surprise that some (or many) of the men in the community began to return to this particular pietistic gesture. The issue of honour thus comes to the fore. The wearing of the traditional Roman head-covering brought honour to the gods; in Paul's teaching it is now the absence of a head-covering which brings honour to God. The question for the neophyte may well have been formulated around the debate of which option was most suitable in honouring one's deity. If so, the traditional view of deference and humble

[1] See Oster 1988:494; Witherington 1995:238.
[2] See Gill 1990:250.

concealment behind a head-covering may have been considered more appropriate—firmly entrenched traditions are often difficult to change, especially, as here, when the new expectations are the very opposite of those earlier traditions (and more so when the traditional proffering of honour to one's god was immersed in the very stability of the *pax Romana*).

Further, if rival members, or groups, were attempting to further an ambition to dominate proceedings by use of such attire then this would undoubtedly cause antagonism and discord. If the Christ-family could be easily dishonoured through any of its members acting improperly; it would be particularly shameful for the members themselves to demonstrate antipathy towards each other.[1] Paul's reasoning is that *in Christ* there should be no sense of superiority, therefore all of the men should be unveiled (they are all ἀδελφοί in Christ); a scenario which removes any sense of social superiority. The new symbol of presenting honour to Christ alone, and so shunning the worship of idols and distinctions of social superiority, was to be the uncovered head. That Paul is only now giving theological justification for his views perhaps demonstrates that during his time in Corinth his theological reflection upon the uncovered head of the man may not have been fully formed or elucidated, or perhaps that he was misunderstood (or that his thinking lacked cogency).[2] But now he wishes them to recognize the basis of his injunction, "I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man... For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and glory of God" (11:3, 7). Here, the language of glory is conjoined to that of

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[1] Esler 1997:124.

[2] Both Engberg-Pedersen (1991:681) and Horrell (1996:169) maintain that Paul is here simply modifying or correcting his previous teaching. This is too simplistic and ignores the fact that Paul was part of the worshipping community for a year-and-a-half. The text was not written in a literary vacuum, and answers need to be formulated as to why *both* the men and women of the community are now behaving contrary to what were surely Pauline expectations. After all, the issue of wearing a head-covering is rather clear: either you wear one or you don't.

honour. The man is not only created in the image of God, but in some way mirrors an inherent aspect of God's own glory which the man is designed to reflect through the uncovered head. The (uncovered) glory of the uncovered man is intended to bring honour to God.[1] The covering-up of that God-given glory within a context of prayerful or prophetic communion with God is an action which now brings shame upon both the man himself (upon his own head[2]) and upon his metaphorical head, Christ.[3]

For women, however, the central social constraints within an honour-shame culture were very different.[4] Within a public liturgical setting a woman may have had the option of wearing a head-covering or not, and particularly at home the wife may well have been uncovered whilst engaged in aspects of the domestic cult, provided only male-kin were present. In Paul's absence, neophyte women entering the community may have wished to mirror conventions at home and remain uncovered amongst kin (asserting the homogeneity of ἀδελφοί in Christ); whilst others may have recognized that if there was to be a change in male head-coverings, then they, too, could make changes. And if the (previously) uncovered male head in some way gave greater glory and honour to God, then perhaps the women (or some of the women) sought to bring such honour to God by emulating the men and removing the head-cover.[5] But in the context of communal meetings, either in a house-group setting or that of a larger meeting of the whole community, the presence, or potential presence, of non Christ-followers (e.g., friends, acquaintances, Godfearers, or even strangers) would necessitate appropriate *public* attire—which was to keep the head covered.

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[1] Legitimated by the Israelite notion of human beings created in the image of God, 1 Cor 11:7.
[2] The debate over the meaning of κεφαλή is well-documented in the major commentaries (see esp. Thiselton 2000:812-822). Its precise meaning makes little difference to my argument here.
[3] On the uncovered head bringing shame to both the man *and* Christ, see Fee 1987:506; Jervis 1992:241f.; Engberg-Pedersen 1991:682.
[4] Paul's instructions at this point are likely to include all of the women at Corinth; cf. Hays 1997:185.
[5] Cf. Wire (1990:123): "...[it is] likely that the women who prophesied uncovered chose to do so for some purpose with social consequences and theological justification."

In this way, for women, the context for the Christ-movement at worship was to remain sensitive to cultural norms regarding presence of non-kin. The woman brought respect and honour to her literal male kin (if believers), and to her fictive kin (the male members of her new family *in Christ*), by the wearing of a suitable head-covering. A woman participating in a setting of worship with her head uncovered had the potential to bring shame to herself, and to the men with whom she was associated (certainly, any believing husband, father, brother, or son may well have felt extreme humiliation by such action[1]). That an uncovered woman was anathema in this context is drawn by Paul's wider cultural parallel, "...it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair: but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil" (11:6). The cultural certitude of the shame brought by a shaved head appears to be obvious in Pauline thought; and, equally, an uncovered female head within a context of prayerful or prophetic communion with God appears to be no different. The woman's uncovered head is considered shameful. Once again, that Paul deems it necessary in the letter to present clarity of thought means that there was an element of vagueness and ambiguity in his previous teaching.

In terms of headship, Paul's directives appear to run parallel with notions of honour: the woman is to bring honour to her metaphorical head, the man; the man is to bring honour to Christ; and Christ to God. Although the position of the woman is one step displaced from Christ vis-à-vis the man, she still has a vital role to play in the structural balance of honour. For a man dishonoured and discredited by the action of female-kin can bring no honour

[1] Contra Watson, who maintains, "In failing to cover her head, she brings dishonour upon her head, that is, upon *herself*...Her uncovered head is clearly *her own* shame: there is no reference at all to a *man*, woman's figurative head, who is put to shame by her conduct" (2000:529; italics his). Rather, the evidence of honour-shame cultures suggests that Watson is in error here, and that the male-kin (not necessarily a husband, if the woman was unmarried), would be shamed also. See MacDonald 1988:117; Gundry-Volf 1997:154-155; Hays 1997:184-185.

upon those to whom he is responsible (an employer, patron, slave owner etc.); indeed, such people would be dishonoured by the man. It remains so within the Christ-movement. The discredited and humiliated male can bring little honour to his god in the eyes of the first-century world. Conversely, a woman, correctly attired, brings honour to a man—in such a context the woman represents the *glory* of the man (11:7)[1]—who, in the context of 1 Cor 11:2-16, is then able to bring honour to Christ.

This may well point to the notion of the woman's ἐξουσία in 1 Cor 11:10. Traditionally, this verse is understood either in the sense that the head-covering is a sign or symbol of a woman's authority to pray or prophesy within the worshipping community,[2] or that a woman should exercise control, power, or freedom over her head.[3] The latter view appears to make more sense, not least because Paul's admonition points forwards (the head-covering is *because of the angels*), and not backwards to thoughts of prayer and prophecy. But the definition requires nuance. By maintaining the appropriate head-covering the woman maintains the structural balance of honour appropriate within the worshipping community, and it is precisely the presence of the head-covering which is a fitting symbol of her *ability* or *capability* (ἐξουσία[4]) to do so. Such ability brings honour and respect to the community as a whole. Conversely, the woman also has ἐξουσία (in a wider sense, of freedom of choice together with an element of power) to bring dishonour upon the man,

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[1] Contra Watson, who writes, "Paul will similarly claim that woman's long hair is 'glory *to her*,' not to her husband—if she has one" (2000:530; italics his). Watson, once again, demonstrates a lack of insight into the context of honour-shame. The Jerusalem Talmud (*j.* Ket. 11.3) contains an anecdote of one Rabbi Jose the Galilean who was advised to divorce his wife because, it was said, "she is not your glory" (cited in Wire 1990:120).

[2] See Hooker 1963-64:413, cf. p. 416; Barrett 1971:254-255; cf. Fee 1987:519-21.

[3] Cf. Fee 1987:520-521; Engberg-Pedersen 1991:682, n. 13.

[4] BAGD 278.

upon Christ, and upon the community.[1] The head-covering in effect becomes a fitting symbol of the honour, self-control and orderliness that Paul desires for the entire community.

This then makes sense with regard to οἱ ἄγγελοι. For whether these are fallen "lusting" angels,[2] "good" angels present as guardians of order,[3] or simply as visiting human messengers,[4] the priority of maintaining the honour of the community by the women is vital. The head-covering means that the woman's own honour is safeguarded from the sexual desire of heavenly beings (or indeed the sexual temptations of other men), and, equally, that she maintains the natural order fitting for a worshipping community (whether in the presence of angelic beings or outsiders), which then brings honour to the community.

4.1.4 Summary

The matrix of honour-shame, which permeated the culture of Roman Corinth in the first-century CE, fruitfully supplies the social context of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. In most honour-shame societies there is a strong emphasis upon clearly defined gender roles; a blurring or rejection of which brings shame—not only upon the individuals directly involved, but also upon one's husband or wife, one's family, one's wider community of friends and associates, and in a religious context upon one's deity. Paul's argument here is one based on distinctive and suitable gender roles for a worshipping community under God. On the issue of head-coverings, then, Paul has established a new norm for the man whilst

[1] Paul's previous use of ἐξουσία in 1 Cor (7:37; 8:9; 9:4, 5, 6, 12, 18) demonstrates that it refers to a right which can be relinquished.
[2] So, Theissen 1987:171-172; D. B. Martin 1995:242-246.
[3] So, Hooker 1963-64:412-413; Hall 1990:39; Wire 1990:121; Jervis 1992:243f.; Gundry-Volf 1997:164; Hays 1997:188.
[4] So, Padgett 1984:81-82; Murphy-O'Connor 1988:271; Thompson 1988:112.

preserving the cultural traditional dress-code for the woman. Again, transgression of the conventional boundary for the women or transgression of the new boundary for the man brings shame, and implies the loss of honour.

In short, Paul is establishing new perspectives for a new community (and possibly new customs for the man). These are perspectives which are deeply grounded in his theological understanding of the created being within a context of honour and shame, and how they are most suitably manifest in worship.

4.2 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Analogous with the description of meals and feasts associated with pagan idols (outlined in the section on 1 Corinthians 8-11:1 above), the fellowship meal of the many voluntary associations (e.g. *collegia*),[1] or indeed, any `secular` dining in the Roman empire, appear to demonstrate the same social concerns regarding the appropriation of honour. That is, a social gathering around a meal was a setting of vital import both for those determined to display wealth and status and for those desiring to improve their honour standing vis-à-vis one's social contemporaries.[2] The Greco-Roman literature reflecting this will be examined below.

An added dimension with regard to this section of Paul's letter is that observed in the previous section: the importance of placing the apostle at the very centre of the community's liturgical praxis. Following Paul's formation of the Christ-movement in Corinth, and during his eighteen-month stay there, one can safely assume that the congregation met numerous times to partake of the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον. Further, one may posit that the practicalities of the meal were originally settled by Paul (or under his direction) and that the theological significance of particular aspects of the meal was drawn out by him for the benefit of the nascent community.[3] Even if one recognizes that by the end of his time in Corinth some or all of the above could have been undertaken by others—as in the case of baptism (1 Cor 1:14-17)—the meals, and the theological significance of those meals, would have taken place under the guiding influence of the apostle himself. So, over the long period of Paul's stay there may be valid grounds for suggesting that the meal became in some way

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[1] See S. G. Wilson 1996.
[2] So, MacMullen 1974:106-120.
[3] Blue (1991:232), Horrell (1996:153), and Winter (2001) are among the few scholars who make note of this point, although it is only Winter who asks pertinent questions of what this may mean for the social context of the text (though see above, p. 2, n. 2).

"institutionalised" within the community's liturgical practice and that, following Paul's departure, the tradition of the meal would continue to be a, or *the*, focal point of the community's liturgical gatherings.

What needs to be assessed, therefore, is how and why the socio-theological function of the meal disintegrated so badly as to provoke not only Paul's severe rebuke upon the factionalism that now existed during the meal, but the issue of a direct warning of judgement and condemnation upon anyone partaking of the meal in an unfitting way (11:29, 34). An analysis of the wider social context of meals is appropriate and this will be followed by an attempt to answer some of the engaging questions.

4.2.1 Fellowship and Meals in the Collegia

Although voluntary associations were typically composed of freedmen who practised the same craft or trade, they mirrored wider civic culture in that their internal structure was associated with honour and prestige.[1] Several lists of club membership survive and these are headed by the names of patrons, wealthy men, sometimes of senatorial rank, who had often made gifts to the club.[2] In return for such beneficence, a club would honour the patron with titles and dedications which added to his status (and which were, in some sense, a suitable *quid pro quo* for his investment). Other members of the club bore titles imitating municipal officials: presidents of a club may be given the title *magistri*, *curators* or *quinquennales*; the accounts were held by the *quaestores*; below these came certain official, the *decuriones*, followed by the ordinary members (*plebs*). Here, those club-members excluded from overt

[1] On the social composition of clubs, see Theissen 2001:76-77.
[2] *ILS* 6174-6; 7216f.; 7225-7.

civic honours could find suitable recompense within the familiarity of the club.[1] The meal played an important part in this process because particular procedures provided a highly visible means for acknowledging status. The clubs offered, as Meeks notes, "the chance for people who had no chance to participate in the politics of the city itself to feel important in their own miniature republics."[2]

In general, a formal meal or banquet would have consisted of perhaps two main courses, the δεῖπνον (the main meal), followed by the συμπόσιον (the drinking party).[3] The transition to the συμπόσιον was normally marked by a libation, and other religious rituals may also have been included such as the singing of hymns.[4] The provision of food was almost entirely made by the patron or by those of comparatively greater wealth and resources, and this obviously meant that the relatively poor were wholly dependent upon the generosity of others. At the same time, the actual division of the food was demarcated upon lines of status, for not only would the wealthy receive larger portions as the more honoured members, they would also receive a better quality of food. Such practice is well attested for the period and simply served to reinforce status distinctions.[5] For instance, the *collegium* in Lanumium (136 CE) established a rule on the sharing of food that read, "...any member who has administered the office of the *quinquennalis* honestly shall receive a share and a half of everything as a mark of honor."[6] Here, the larger share at the meal was an obviously distinct and *highly visible* sign of honour, and it was, of course, inconceivable that any

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[1] So, MacMullen 1974:75-77; Smith 1981:328; Meeks 1983:31, 134.
[2] 1983:31.
[3] A small appetizer prior to the may have constituted a third course, see Mart. *Ep.* 11.31.4-7; Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 734A. Further on table fellowship, see Esler 1998:93-116. On the symposion, Murray 1990.
[4] See Witherington 1995:192-195, 241-247.
[5] Carcopino 1941:270-271; Malherbe 1977:82; Theissen 1982:154, 156; and cf. Pliny *Ep* 2.6; Juv *Sat* 5; Mart. *Ep.* 1.20; 3.49, 60; 4.85; 6.11; 10.49. Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.14) notes Socrates' difficulty in attempting to have food shared equally, as does Plutarch in the case of Lycurgus (*Mor.* 226E-227A; *Lyc.* 11).
[6] Quoted in Theissen 1982:154.

protest would be made about larger and better portions going to those whose contributions made the meal possible in the first place. So, even though the clubs fostered fellowship and mutual concern, the fact that in the distribution of money or food a larger share was given to the patron and officials, demonstrates that the club functioned as a microcosm of wider civic culture wherein honour played a vital part in the club's social objectives.[1]

Other significant and highly visible marks of honour centred upon one's seated position at table and, with it, one's reclining posture. Such attitudes are well attested in respect of private meals and dinner parties, but are equally true of clubs and religious organizations. For example, the statutes of the College of Diana and Antinous, an Italian funerary society of the second century CE, included a rule against "moving from one place to another;" and the statutes of the Iobakchoi, a second century CE Athenian religious association dedicated to Bacchus or Dionysus, included a fine if "...anyone is found...occupying the couch of another member."[2] Particular seating positions at table represented varying degrees of honour and these rules demonstrate the use and regulation of ranking systems at table and the import of maintaining such distinctions.[3] In a similar way, to recline at table was considered a posture associated with elegance and social rank, and was traditionally reserved for the free-born male. Women, children and slaves were expected to sit. Although by the first-century CE such customs were slowly changing and,

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[1] Smith 1981:327.
[2] Smith 1981:324.
[3] The same customs are reflected in Jesus' parable of the places of honour at a banquet (Lk 14:7-11). Here, the astute guest has the potential to be honoured in sight of all the other guests (who are reclining at table) by initially choosing a lower place than his status would normally allow him. The converse, for the arrogant guest, is that his status does not allow him to seat himself at a particular place at table and he is subsequently asked to move to a more appropriate place. In having to do so he is disgraced before all. The relevance of the parable here, is the observation of the distinct demarcation which associates one's status with a particular position at table. With it, of course, go notions of honour and shame. Cf. also Mk 12:39; Lk 11:43; Plut. *Mor.* 149A-B.

for example, women were allowed to recline,[1] the indelible mark on social perception left by these earlier traditions meant that for a man to sit at table was imbued with the social stigma of a particular class and was felt to bring dishonour and shame. This is evident in Lucian's description of a late-arriving male guest to a banquet at which all of the reclining positions were taken (and at which women were present). He is invited to sit, but he refuses on the grounds that *sitting* at a banquet is "womanish and weak." Rather, he elects to recline on the floor.[2]

But "knowing" one's social place in a group-context did not mean that procedures at fellowship meals were always calm and relaxed. Rather, the opposite. As has already been frequently noted, the notion of strife and enmity in public gatherings is entirely consistent within the antagonistic environment of first-century social life. Plutarch notes,

> Those who eat too much from the dishes that belong to all antagonize those who are slow and are left behind as it were in the wake of a swift-sailing ship. For suspicion, grabbing, snatching, and elbowing among the guests do not, I think, make a friendly and convivial prelude to a banquet; such behavior is boorish and crude and often ends in insults and angry outbursts. (*Mor.* 2.10.643-644)

He concludes, "...the taking of another's and greed for what is common to all began injustice and strife."[3] Such observations qualify the evidence collected by D. E. Smith on the common rules and injunctions of various clubs for banquet meetings. Smith found,

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[1] See esp. K. Corley 1993:28-29; also Carcopino 1941:265; 317, n. 121. On the wider changes in meal etiquette amongst Greco-Roman women, see K. Corley 1993, chapter 2.
[2] *Symp.* 13.
[3] *Mor.* 642F.

> 1) injunctions against quarreling and fighting; 2) injunctions against taking the assigned place of another; 3) injunctions against speaking out of turn or without permission; 4) injunctions against fomenting factions; 5) injunctions against accusing a fellow member before a public court; 6) specifications for trials within the club for inter-club disputes; 7) specifications for worship activities. (1981:323[1])

It is of interest that Paul is required to address most of the concerns of this list within the letter of 1 Corinthians.[2]

In terms of appreciating the honour-bound context of fellowship meals and private dining we turn once again to Plutarch for he has much to say on the subject. He recognizes that a visible *acknowledgement* of status distinctions is vital at such occasions, and that this is an assumed expectation of higher-status guests. He writes, "For the man of quality does not have his honour and his station in the world, yet fail to receive recognition in the place he occupies at dinner; nor will a host drink to one of his guests before another, yet overlook their distinctions in placing them at table."[3] In respect of what Plutarch maintains are simply traditional "customs," he recognizes that appropriate honour must be made by a host towards his guests and that the host can make good use of, what he calls, "familiar greetings," together with the "drinking of toasts," in order that he is seen to be "doing honour not just to anyone nor carelessly, but as carefully as possible."[4] Indeed, Plutarch concedes that within his own social milieu this is imperative, for if appropriate honour is not granted then jealousy and enmity immediately arise, "...if we humble some of them and

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[1] And see pp. 323-325. It appears that the ancient Celts were notoriously sensitive over questions of honour at meals. Diodorus Siculus (5.28) reports that disputes during meals often led to challenges of single combat; and Athenaeus (*Deipn.* 4.154) notes that at dinner the Celts sometimes engaged in fights, occasionally to the death, over questions of who was the best among them and so worthy of the finest portions of the meal.

[2] As Witherington correctly observes of the same list (1995:244). Such attitudes are not exclusive to the first-century CE. Aristotle had earlier observed that the whole question of property was "universally the cause of party strife" *Pol* 2.4.1; cf. Aristid. *Or.* 23.65.

[3] Plut. *Mor.* 616B; cf. *Mor.* 619B-F, 679C-D.

[4] *Mor.* 617A-B.

exalt others, we shall rekindle their hostility and set it aflame again through ambitious rivalry."[1] Hence, Plutarch is well-aware of the social "power" of honour and the vital necessity of suitable recognition of an individual's honour. In summing up his outlook towards distinctions of honour between his guests he compares his own approach with that of the more "egalitarian" approach of his brother, Timon,

> Timon will say that one ought not to rob the other guests of the honour due to position by granting the position of honour to one of them...[but] Though he thinks that he avoids being offensive to his guests, he draws it down all the more upon himself to be so, for he offends each one of them by depriving him of his accustomed honour. To me, however, the matter of making distinctions among one's guests does not seem very hard...[and] inasmuch as there are a number of places which have come to be held in honour, their distribution does not arouse jealousy if the host is able to guess rightly and give to each of the so-called dignitaries the place he likes...But if the honours are hard to decide, and the guests are touchy, then we see what device I apply. If my father is present, I do him the honour of putting him in the most distinguished place; if he is not present, I honour my grandfather, of the father-in-law, or my father's brother, or any one among those guests who admittedly have a particular claim to precedence at the hands of the host. (*Mor.* 617C-E)

In sum, appropriate recognition of status distinctions at either private dinners or at fellowship group meals was deemed to be essential for the majority of the guests. The failure to make a gesture of suitable acknowledgment of status and honour was deemed to be a highly public affront and, as such, was a source of severe humiliation. Hostility, insult, and anger could quickly follow. As we see with Plutarch's self-comparison to Timon, the notion of social equality at table may not only have appeared unworkable in his first-century cultural milieu, but was likely to have been considered anathema by many. So, too, the attempt by the nascent believing community of Corinth to suggest (or impose) a more equal

[1] *Mor.* 616E-F.

framework of commensality upon a neophyte steeped in honour-bound traditions involving various forms of social antagonism may well have occasioned difficulties from the outset. That said, it is to the text of 1 Corinthians 11 that we now turn.

4.2.2 Shame at the Lord's Table

The subject matter discussed in 1 Cor 11:17-34 is the third item of the community's behaviour brought to Paul's attention perhaps as an oral report by Chloe's people or by the Stephanas delegation. In it, Paul is made aware of the σχίσματα and αἱρέσεις which exist when the whole congregation came together to share a fellowship meal and the Lord's Supper.[1] If the social-setting outlined in section 1.4 is correct, and the congregation met in some type of "club-house," then members would obviously have taken their own food along to the gathering, although the richer believers may have been expected to take extra food for the poor (or may even have provided all of the food). But the situation was open to abuse. For the disparate factions, striving in pursuit of greater honour, were competing over the type and amount of food taken and eaten. The factions and divisions are typically seen as two groups, the haves and the have-nots;[2] but the scenario may not be quite so simple. There may be a number of factions in competition with one another, and here, consideration and sensitivities towards the poor were left to one-side.[3]

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[1] Paul's recounting of the Last Supper tradition (11:23-26) assumes that the taking of the eucharistic elements is done within the framework of τὸ δεῖπνον; that is, there is an actual meal *between* the word spoken over the bread and that spoken over the cup (So, Theissen 1982:152; cf. Winter 1989:102; Theissen 2003:377ff.). Τὸ δεῖπνον normally designates the main meal of the day in the Greco-Roman world, typically eaten in the evening (Fee 1987:539).

[2] So, Theissen 1982:148; Fee 1987:533-534; Winter 1989:100; Hofius 1993:92; Dunn 1995:77-78; Horrell 1995b:198 and n. 7; Witherington 1995:248.

[3] The factionalism may well have been linked to the divisions of 1:12, which may have developed from particular house-groups.

The major exegetical points of debate in this section surround the meanings of the verbs προλαμβάνω (v. 21), and ἐκδέχομαι (v. 33). Traditionally, the compound verb προλαμβάνω has been understood in the temporal sense of "to take beforehand" (that is, to begin eating before others do), and this was then presumed to relate to the imperative ἐκδέχεσθε (v. 33) in that Paul's injunction to the "haves" was to urge them to "wait for" the "have-nots."[1] But the verb προλαμβάνω occurs only three times in the NT, one of which, Gal 6:1, provides an example of the verb being used non-temporally (here, simply equivalent to "be taken").[2] In light of this, the use of προλαμβάνω in 1 Cor 11:21 is not as certain as at first seems, and Paul's usage in Gal 6:1 may better reflect that here in 1 Corinthians 11. Further, Fee points out that, within the social context of eating (ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν, v. 21), there is no decisive evidence that προλαμβάνω in Greek literature is used with a temporal meaning at all,[3] and more recently, Bruce Winter has suggested a more convincing alternative.[4] Winter argues that here προλαμβάνω does not retain its temporal sense (and so does not refer to the prior eating of food by the wealthier believers), but simply points to the "haves," "devouring" or "consuming" their own food while the poorer believers were going without (μὴ ἔχοντες). His proposal is supported by an inscription which refers to a meal (i.e., pointing to a similar social scenario) in the temple of Asclepios at Epidaurus. Here, προλαμβάνω is employed three times,

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[1] So, Theissen 1982:151-153; Murphy-O'Connor 1983:161; Pogoloff 1992:243; Witherington 1995:248, n. 23; Theissen 2003:378; RSV, NRSV, NIV, NJB, KJV, NKJV.
[2] The third text is Mk 14:8.
[3] Fee (1987:542; cf. p. 568) concludes that the verb is "likely to be an intensified form of "take," meaning something close to 'consume' or 'devour.' But one cannot totally rule out a temporal sense." Cf. BAGD *sv* 2a.
[4] Winter 1978. Winter's thesis is followed by Blue (1991), Hofius (1993), Engberg-Pedersen (1993), Hays (1997), Eriksson (1998), and Thiselton (2000). Cf. Fee 1987:542.

τυρὸν καὶ ἄρτον προλαβεῖν ("eating cheese and bread");
κιτίου προλαμβάνειν ("eating of lemon skins");
γάλα μετὰ μέλιτος προλαμβανεῖν ("eating milk with honey").[1]

In each case the temporal force of the prefix is lost and the verb simply denotes the sense of "to take" in the context of eating.[2] Given the comparable social context of a meal in 1 Cor 11:21, it would appear entirely reasonable to render προλαμβάνω in an equivalent way (e.g., "consume;"[3] "take" for oneself;[4] or "to (par)take of"[5]).

The second verb, ἐκδέχομαι, has a particularly wide semantic range and depends upon the wider context for its precise nuance.[6] As noted above, it has traditionally been taken with the earlier understanding of προλαμβάνω by which it has been defined as, "to wait for one-another."[7] Together with the reappraisal of προλαμβάνω, it has been re-examined within the wider framework of these verses, for the primary meaning of the verb is not necessarily "to wait," but can mean "expect someone" (cf. 1 Cor 16:11), or "look forward to someone/something" (cf. Heb 11:10), or "receive someone" (in the sense of "entertain" as a host), or "welcome/accept someone."[8] On this reading, Paul's point is that the wealthier believers are to display hospitality by welcoming and receiving the poorer believers to the fellowship meal and Lord's Supper (cf. Rom 12:13, 15:7). The strength of this proposal is that it makes greater sense of Paul's admonitions in 11:33-34, for if the meaning of Paul's imperative ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε in v. 33 were simply to "wait for one another," this would not alleviate the problem that there were those poorer believers who

[1] *SIG* 1170:1.7, 15; 11.9-10 (2nd CE).
[2] Cf. MM 542; BAGD 708.
[3] So, Winter 1978.
[4] So, Engberg-Pedersen 1993:110.
[5] So, Hofius 1993:91
[6] So, Fee 1987:568.
[7] For exegetes who hold this view, see p. 232, n. 1 above. Also P. Lampe 1994:193, 203-205.
[8] So, LSJ; and see also Fee 1987:540-543, 567-568; and esp. Hofius 1993:93f., and footnotes.

had little or no food to eat. Rather, if Paul's demand is that the wealthier believers welcome and share with the poor, then the passage becomes more intelligible.[1]

The social setting of the text is now clearer. At the fellowship meal there is division and factionalism as the congregation segregates into a number of groups which seek to outdo each other in the volume and quality of the food and drink consumed. In the secular meetings outlined above, this accords with the expectations of voluntary associations where both greater quantity and better quality of food and drink were provided for a patron and higher-status members than to those of lower status. In this sense, as Theissen remarks, the richer members of the community were "simply adopting a pattern of behaviour customary at that time."[2] Although some food may have been provided for the poor, this was probably very little, and certainly of lower quality, and the result was that as one member went hungry another had the opportunity of becoming drunk (11:21).[3] Herein lays the σχίσματα: although the believers eat together in the same space they are yet separated into antagonistic social groups demarcated by cultural concepts of appropriating honour. So, too, as the groups of wealthier believers enjoy their feast in the presence of the hungry poor, their arrogant display of insouciance serves to shame and humiliate (καταισχύνειν, 11:22) those who have nothing.[4] The action of the wealthier groups also has the effect of treating the community with contempt (11:22), and their disdain towards the poor is, at the same time, a visible demonstration of contempt for the body of Christ.

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[1] Winter 1989:102.
[2] 1982:154.
[3] For the thesis that the provision of food may have been influenced by grain shortages and potential famine; see Winter 1989; Thiselton 2000:852-853.
[4] The verb καταισχύνειν occurs more frequently in the Corinthian correspondence than in the rest of the NT combined. It is found in 1 Cor 1:27 (x2); 11:4, 5; 11:22; 2 Cor 7:14; 9:4. Elsewhere it is found in Lk 13:17; Rom 5:5; 9:33; 10:11; and 1 Pet 2:6; 3:16.

The wealthier members may have possibly justified such behaviour by appealing to a feeling of hunger (cf. 11:22, 34), or to normative cultural practice. In terms of the ἐκκλησία, however, Paul deems that such practice has no place at the Lord's Table, and he seeks to undermine cultural expectations within a radically conformed Christ-centred concept of commensality. In effect, he calls upon the wealthier believers to actually remove the barriers of status differentiation and to receive the poorer members as equal participants of the fellowship meal and Lord's Supper. Meeks (following Theissen) sees this as "a compromise...so that at the Lord's Supper the norm of equality can prevail,"[1] but within an honour-shame culture Paul's admonitions are much more radical than Meeks allows. For within the Corinthians' conventional social mores, which deemed as entirely appropriate suitable distinctions of rank and status to be recognized at table, Paul's directives represent nothing short of a direct challenge to the status-orientated ideology. He requires that the wealthier believers adjust both their expectations and their behaviour to accommodate the needs of those of lower status, which in itself, in Greco-Roman culture, would have meant a reversal of normal status expectations. In short, the higher-status believers would have to undergo severe loss of honour to participate in Paul's uncompromising model of "egalitarian" commensality.[2]

Paul's defence of this radical command is twofold. Firstly, he makes an appeal to Christ's death and the institution of the meal as the essential paradigm of self-sacrifice (vv. 23-26); and, secondly, he issues a warning of judgement against inappropriate behaviour at the Lord's Table (vv. 27-32). The first point instructs the Corinthians that they are to remember Christ's sacrifice as they eat together. This is an essential and largely ignored

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[1] Meeks 1983:159.

[2] Here Paul's proposal is comparable to that of Pliny (*Ep* 2.6), who maintained that in a common meal, one of higher social status should adjust his eating habits to those appropriate to one of a lower social status.

point, for, in Paul's absence, the Corinthian neophytes may have had little instruction on the historical basis of the meal, or the Last Supper tradition(s); nor indeed on Pauline thinking and theology related to it.[1] Paul states categorically that the meal they take together stands in continuity with the Last Supper tradition,[2] most likely a Passover meal,[3] wherein Jesus reinterpreted the elements of bread and wine as representations of his body and blood shortly to be given over in death on the cross. The act of remembering (τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμησιν, 11:24, 25) points indelibly to the memory of the crucified one and his saving work, and the prepositional attributive τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν designates the framework within which this is now conceived: it is for *all* of the Corinthian believers. At the same time, issues of honour-shame come to the fore, for in the very act of remembering Jesus' death on a cross the community is forced to remember the one who was an *accepting* victim of extreme humiliation and shame.

In light of this tradition, Paul castigates the behaviour of the wealthier believers, for their shameful behaviour stands in contradiction to the very essence of what Jesus founded. The eucharistic actions that encompass the meal and which make it the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον allow all of the participants an equal share in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ and in the future consummation of the salvation realized by that death. Christ and his saving act remain fundamentally essential to the Eucharist. A denial of the corporate nature of the paradosis (cf. the plurality of ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν) disregards Christ's saving death and provokes a sin against Christ himself. Consequently, Paul's explanatory gloss in 11:26 ("For as often as you eat

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[1] Contra, Engberg-Pedersen who claims here (1993:125), "He [Paul] is not teaching them anything new." Rather, Paul's outline in 11:23-26 may well have been the first articulated expression of the Last Supper tradition for many of the neophytes.

[2] Hofius 1993:100, "Each Lord's Supper wherever and whenever it is celebrated is a continuation of the Last Supper of Jesus."

[3] See Jeremias 1966:15-88; I. H. Marshall 1980a:57-75; Hofius 1993; Neyrey 1986:142ff., 151ff.; Thiselton 2000:871-874.

this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes") looks back and reminds the reader/hearer of 1:18-2:2. The fundamental message of Paul's preaching remains Christ crucified.

Furthermore, 11:26 asserts that the remembering is thus realized in the proclaiming. The verb καταγγέλλω is almost exclusively used in the NT of making a verbal proclamation towards *outsiders*, either of the gospel as the word of God,[1] or of Christ as the means of salvation (and forgiveness of sins) through his resurrection from the dead.[2] So, the Corinthians' fellowship meal around the Lord's Table is not an exclusively internal event; the community is actually participating in a gathering which should proclaim the *good news* of the Christ-event to outsiders. But Paul recognized further that one cannot properly proclaim the radical nature of life "in Christ" without also *conforming* oneself to it. Failure to do so can lead only to one being "answerable for the body and blood of the Lord" (11:27). Paul may actually conceive here that such a one will thus demonstrate an allegiance with the "rulers of this age" who crucified the Lord (2:8) and who are thus responsible for his broken body and shed blood. And this may be the reason why he is able to recognize that the factions (αἱρέσεις, 11:19) at the Lord's Table may have the positive effect of demonstrating which members of the congregation are the δόκιμοι, the approved and genuine ones; those who are able to pass the test (cf. 9:27).[3] L&N allow a definition of "honoured" within the semantic field, and define δόκιμος as "pertaining to being respected on the basis of proven worth, 'respected, honored.'" They write, "In a number of languages, meanings such as those of τίμιος, ἔντιμος, ἔνδοξος, and δόκιμος may be rendered by a type of clause involving people's attitudes toward an individual, for example, 'one who people think is

[1] Acts 13:5, 15:36, 17:13; 1 Cor 2:1, 9:14.
[2] Acts 3:24, 4:2, 13:38, 16:17, 17:3; Phil 1:17-18; Col 1:28.
[3] Seven of the thirteen uses of (α)δόκιμος and cognates are found in the Corinthian correspondence, 1 Cor 9:27, 11:19; 2 Cor 10:18, 13;5, 6, 7 (x2).

great' or 'one of whom everyone approves' or 'one to whom everyone looks up.'"[1] In this way, the δόκιμοι can be construed as those who are, in the present through worthy actions, predicated of honour—either by men (Rom 14:18; 2 Cor 13:7; Jam 1:12) or by God/Christ (Rom 16:10; 2 Cor 10:18).[2]

In short, the cross stands supreme over the criteria of what it means to be a believer. The divisions seen in chs. 1-4 together with the factionalism found in the sharing of the Eucharist undermine the very heart of why the worshipping community celebrates the Lord's Supper at all. Ironically, due to the social constraints surrounding the appropriation of honour, and with it the correlative nature of bringing shame upon others, what should have been the focus of ecclesial unity had become the focus of factionalism and division and an opportunity for some to shame others.[3]

4.2.3 Summary

The social context of this section is most likely one of antagonistic groups at a fellowship meal striving and competing for greater honour. Here, there is factionalism and division, and a number of believers are being humiliated and shamed in the process. Certain groups are demonstrating an air of contempt towards what should have been a unified meeting of the body of Christ. In bringing to mind the Last Supper paradosis and the imagery of the 'body of Christ,' handed over and broken *for you* (v. 24), Paul utilizes the

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[1] Cf. LSJ *sv*, "of persons, *approved, esteemed, notable*." Cf. p. 68, n. 3.

[2] Contra Fee (1987:538f.) who simply sees here an example of Paul's eschatological end-time perspective. But the revealing of the δόκιμοι need not be a future end-time event; rather, attitudes and behaviour toward the congregational factionalism could manifest the δόκιμοι in the present as those deserving of human or divine honour.

[3] As Schottroff writes (2000:53), "This meal must have been a humiliating situation for the poor, whose dignity as children of the one Creator of all human beings was called into question."

theological premise upon which he conceives the believing community to be founded. Here, the social body of Christ (vv. 27-29), the Corinthian ἐκκλησία, finds its meaning and is predicated upon the sacramental body of Christ (vv. 23-26)—the dual metaphor of the 'body' inextricably connects Christ's death on the cross with a profound understanding of the type of community brought into being by that very action (which Paul will further explicate in 1 Cor 12-13). The current incongruity between the paradigm which the cross establishes, and which should be an adequate demonstration for the on-going life of the community of faith, and the current social reality of a disunified, bickering community causes Paul to reflect upon the nature of divine judgement to which such behaviour is leading (and has, in fact, already led). In recollecting Christ's ignominious death upon the cross Paul confronts the community with a stark reminder that the Lord for whom they gather in thanks and commemoration, is also the one who was a victim of ultimate shame; and this is an uncompromising observation on the behaviour of those who would seek to shame others in lusting after honour.

4.3 1 CORINTHIANS 12-14

Following his discussion of the Lord's Supper, Paul then proceeds to examine "spiritual gifts" (especially tongues[1] and prophecy[2]), as well as general order within the community's liturgical setting. This section will examine 1 Cor 12-14, paying particular attention to the body metaphor of 1 Cor 12 and the nature of spiritual gifts. It will be set within a framework of honour-shame, whereby, it is argued that new nuances of Paul's discourse in its social context will be elucidated, and that these will be seen to have an important bearing upon his argument as a whole.

4.3.1 Introduction

The text indicates that the social-setting of 1 Cor 12-14 is a gathering of the whole community (14:23, 26), and this appears to be identical to that outlined in 11:17-34. Certainly, the linguistic similarities used in the two sections are striking,

> συνέρχεσθε (11:17)
> πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ (11:18)
> Συνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ (11:20)

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[1] Tongues, or glossolalia (from λαλέω and γλῶσσα), is the terminology given to a gift of the Holy Spirit spoken of by Paul in 1 Cor 12-14. It is unintelligible speech (although spoken of as a form of prayer, worship, or thanksgiving) offered to God and capable of edifying the speaker. It may have an association with angelic utterances (13:1). A complimentary gift, the interpretation of tongues is useful for the edification of the church. On glossolalia, see esp. Dunn 1975; Robeck 1993 (and the bibliography cited there); Thiselton 2000:970-988 (and the literature cited there).

[2] Thiselton (2000:964), drawing on the work of others, suggests a useful working definition of prophecy, "Prophecy, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, combines pastoral insight into the needs of persons, communities, and situations with the ability to address these with a God-given utterance or longer discourse (whether unprompted or prepared with judgment, decision, and rational reflection) leading to challenge or comfort, judgment, or consolation, but ultimately building up the addressees." On "prophet," the 1973 Seminar on Early Christian Prophecy of the SBL adopted a definition based on the common features of the use of the "prophet" word-group in a number of early sources. This definition has been widely received, "The early Christian prophet was an immediately-inspired spokesperson for God, the risen Jesus, or the Spirit who received intelligible oracles that he or she felt impelled to deliver to the Christian community or, representing the community, to the general public."

συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν (11:33)
συνέρχησθε (11:34)
'Εὰν οὖν συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ (14:23)
ὅταν συνέρχησθε (14:26)

James Dunn, however, maintains that the two sections of Paul's letter speak of two separate events on separate gatherings, although he makes no attempt to explain or describe the social-scenarios of either (1983:213ff.). But the evidence of the early canonical and non-canonical traditions describing primitive congregational meetings indicates frequent conjoining of the Lord's Supper with elements of prayer and worship.[1] These support the collocation of the two elements here in 1 Corinthians for, after all, Paul makes the point that tongues is itself simply a form of prayer (14:14), or of worship (14:15), or of giving thanks (14:17). In his study of early Christian worship, Oscar Cullman maintains that, "as a rule there was no gathering of the community without the breaking of bread" and that "the Lord's Supper is thus the basis and goal of every gathering."[2] Certainly, in light of these early traditions, together with those passed on by Paul (11:23ff.), one may expect that if the whole community came together only on a monthly basis, the breaking of bread would have been of paramount importance. And such a scenario need not conflict with the potential presence of unbelievers entering a meeting (11:23-25), for Paul presumes that the uninvited enter only after "all begin to speak in tongues" or "all prophesy" (14:23, 24)—hence *after*

[1] Acts 2:42, 46-47; cf. *Did.* 9-10, linking the Lord's Supper and prophecy; Ign. *Smyrn.* 6, linking the Lord's Supper and prayer; *Acts Paul* 9, linking the Lord's Supper with the singing of psalms and hymns. The Gospel traditions frequently conjoin the breaking of bread with prayer, Mt 14:19; 15:36; Mk 8:6; Lk 24:30; Acts 27:35; and, likewise, the Gospel traditions of the Last Supper do the same, Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19.
[2] 1953:29. Cf. K. Corley 1993:24, who writes: "the primary setting of early Christian dialogue and worship was a formal public meal."

the Lord's Supper and during the time of prayer and worship.[1] He may assume here that the commotion of a typical meeting, done in disorderly fashion (14:33), is such to warrant attention from passers-by.[2]

Furthermore, if the *whole* congregation did meet at different times for different social functions, one may expect Paul to make a point of clarification at the beginning of 11:17-34 regarding which meeting he was about to discuss. The fact that he mentions the "coming together" of the community three times (11:17, 18, 20a) *before* mention of the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον suggests that he assumed the Corinthians knew at the outset which meeting he was referring to, and this more likely points to a single specific meeting of the whole Christ-movement.[3] In view of these points, it appears reasonable to assume that the adjoining sections of Paul's letter describe two facets of one congregational meeting and that these required distinct treatments because of the particular nature of the separate problems. The procedure of following the Eucharist with a time of prayer and worship would also follow the pattern of a formal Greco-Roman evening meal where the δεῖπνον would be proceeded by the συμπόσιον—a time for *conversation*, further drinking, and perhaps some

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[1] Hence, contra Dunn (1983:213) who sees the unacceptable notion that an unbeliever may be present at the Lord's Supper to be one of the major points in distinguishing the meeting in 1 Cor 11:17-34 from that in 1 Cor 12-14. But the eating of the Lord's Supper by unbelievers is not unprecedented even within the NT itself (see Acts 27:34-36; Jude 12; cf. *Acts Pet.* 2; *Acts Thom.* 27). Witherington (1995:284) and Hays (1997:238) suggest that the "outsider" may be a guest of a believer or the unbelieving spouse of 1 Cor 7:12-16, but the doubt suggested in these clauses (in the subjunctives, εἰσέλθωσιν, εἰσέλθῃ; 11:23, 24) is better interpreted as Paul mooting the possibility that *strangers* may enter a meeting unannounced.

[2] The ἰδιῶται are distinct from the ἄπιστοι, and most likely represent "common/average" people who are "uneducated" in spiritual things (LSJ II.2; III.2, 3). The ἄπιστοι are those who consciously reject the tenets of the believing community until a prophetic word brings divine conviction which leads to repentance (1 Cor 14:24-25). This is contra Hays who simply sees the two as synonyms (1997:238). On "categories of adherence" of outsiders, see Esler 1987:36-45; N. H. Taylor 1995.

[3] Dunn (1983) maintains that Paul's use of συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν in 1 Cor 11:33 specifies a gathering *exclusively* for the purpose of eating together. But this need not necessarily be the case. In the wider context, Paul may well be simply emphasizing the specific point at which judgment of the community may occur; it is *at the point of sitting down together to eat* that the "have-nots" are humiliated and that such action brings divine judgement upon the community.

form of entertainment.[1] It is of interest, then, that the primary subject matter of 1 Cor 12-14 surrounds the need for propriety both in "conversation" and in verbal instruction, and that the picture presented of Corinthian worship as unstructured and undisciplined is consistent with a typical symposium setting.[2]

The composition of Paul's discussion in 1 Cor 12-14 falls into three distinct parts. The first (12:1-31a), describes and then graphically illustrates the mutually important and complimentary role of spiritual gifts in the Corinthian community (whose members together make up the one body of Christ). The central section (12:31b-13:13) exalts the superiority of love among the community and, although on a superficial reading may appear to be a digression, it actually provides an overriding paradigm for many aspects of inter-personal behaviour. The final section (14:1-40) provides specific guidelines for the use of spiritual gifts during worship (especially the gifts of prophecy and tongues). It is only in this final part that certain "problems" related to the community's propriety in worship come to the fore, and this allows one to see, retrospectively, the overriding import of the theological reflections presented in chapters 12 and 13.[3]

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[1] On the wider background of Greco-Roman meals, Murray 1990; K. Corley 1993, ch. 2.

[2] Cf. Lucian *Symp.* 17. The younger Pliny makes an immediate connection between the Lord's Supper and the meetings of secular clubs (*Ep.* 10.96).

[3] Contra Fee (1987:615) who writes: "...chap. 14, where Paul corrects their position with regard to tongues, says nothing to indicate that this gift was causing internal strife of any kind." Uncharacteristically, Fee fails to deal with Paul's oft-used technique of persuasion. This whole section is framed by Paul's need to discuss "spiritual gifts" (12:1; 14:37-40), and the apostle's initial diplomacy with regard to tongues (i.e., his expression of high regard for spiritual gifts (12:31; 14:1); his own glossolalia (14:18); and his warning not to suppress it (14:39)), actually disguise the fact that here he strives to correct its excessive evaluation. Once the essential unity of this section is recognized, one then needs only to adequately account for Paul's extended discussion and incorporation of the body metaphor and his "excursus" of ch. 13. The talk of an impending schism in the body of Christ (12:25), a concept wholly foreign to the body metaphor employed in extra-biblical texts, together with his emphasis upon the priority of love, point inextricably to some sort of internal strife within the community.

4.3.2 1 Corinthians 12: The Honourable Members

Paul begins 1 Cor 12 with a note of biting irony when he claims that in some way the Corinthians are "ignorant" or are "uninformed" (ἀγνοεῖν) about spiritual gifts. Such sentiments follow on from 2:6-16 and the summation of 3:1, "But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men (πνευματικοί) but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ." The Corinthians had understood themselves to be authorities on all matters spiritual but in chs. 12-14 Paul is, once again, about to disarm their understanding of spiritual things and he does so with a subtle move which sees a terminological shift from the use of *pneumatika* to that of *charismata*[1] (12:4 and thereafter in vv. 9, 28, 30, 31). Whereas the former term stresses the spiritual nature or source of a particular ability or gift, Paul's deliberate preference for the use of *charismata* serves to highlight their nature as unmerited gifts—these are gifts of God given purely by grace and irrespective of status or personal achievement. Verses 12:4-11 then proceed to emphasize the sovereign initiative of God in allocating and empowering *all* of the spiritual gifts active within the community. But, in 12:12ff., Paul's discourse makes a sharp rhetorical twist, for he places his discussion of spiritual gifts to one-side for a moment while he elucidates a metaphorical perspective of the congregation as the body of Christ (12:12-26).[2]

The use of the body-metaphor to represent a socio-political organization has a long tradition going back to the fifth-century BCE (and continuing into the second-century CE),

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[1] Possibly Paul's own term, so Witherington 1995:255.

[2] Archaeological excavations of the Asclepion in Corinth uncovered a large number of terracotta ex-votos representing numerous body-parts supposedly cured by the god (heads, hands and feet, arms and legs, breasts and genitals, and eyes and ears). It is maintained by some that these may have contributed to the formation of Paul's concept of the community as the Body (see Murphy-O'Connor 1983:165-167; Oster 1992; Witherington 1995:14-15), but the fact that these body-parts are separable and separated makes such a suggestion unlikely; the imagery of Paul points more towards his conception of the body as a holistic unity.

and is attested in both Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Judean texts.[1] Its use was multifarious—it was employed as a rhetorical means of overcoming enmity between individuals; or in overcoming factionalism within a group (where it was designed to urge a sense of corporate unity);[2] or the metaphor was utilized to urge those of the lower classes to respect and value their place in the current social order and, hence, not to disrupt the "natural equilibrium" of the "body" by rebelling against their superiors.[3] Examples from Xenophon and Plutarch serve to highlight the metaphor's use within an honour-shame context. In the first, Xenophon notes a speech by Socrates urging his friend Chaerecrates to overcome hostilities with his brother, Chaerophon,

> What if a pair of hands refused the office of mutual help for which God made them, and tried to thwart each other; or if a pair of feet neglected the duty of working together, for which they were fashioned, and took to hampering each other? That is how you two are behaving at present. Would it not be utterly senseless and disastrous to use for hindrance instruments that were made for help? And, moreover, a pair of brothers, in my judgment, were made by God to render better service one to the other than a pair of hands and feet and eyes and all the instruments that he meant to be used as fellows. But two brothers, when they are friends, act simultaneously for mutual benefit, however far parted one from the other. Is it that you hesitate to make a beginning, for fear of disgracing yourself by first showing kindness to your brother?...[But] you will have shown that you are indeed honest and brotherly, he that he is base and unworthy of kindness. But I am confident that no such result will follow; for I think that, as soon as he is aware of your challenge to this contest, he will be all eagerness to outdo your kind words and actions. (*Mem.* 2.3.18-19)

Of interest in the text is that Socrates presupposes that kinship should lead to a situation of "mutual benefit," but that enmity has precedented a state of antagonism between the two

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[1] See esp. M. M. Mitchell 1991:157-164; also Meeks 1983:89ff.; Neyrey 1986:131-158; D. B. Martin 1995; Horrell 1996:178-184; and commentaries.
[2] D. B. Martin 1995:92.
[3] Dion. Hal. 6.86; Livy 2.32.9-12.

parties. The text also highlights that in an honour-shame culture the attempt to overcome such hostility brings an anxiety of rejection and so a "fear of disgrace." In Socrates' urging for Chaerecrates to make the first move in a process of reconciliation he also views this as a challenge-response, a "contest," in a positive way, towards the resolution of enmity and the reunion of brotherhood. Similarly, Plutarch also recognizes the honour-shame context of enmity and with it the malevolence which can arise even within kin-relationships,

> ...if overreaching and factious strife be engendered...they corrupt and destroy the animal most shamefully; so through the concord of brothers both family and household are sound and flourish, and friends and intimates, like an harmonious choir, neither do nor say, nor think, anything discordant...For as diseases in bodies which cannot accept their proper diet engender cravings for many strange and harmful foods, so slander and suspicion entertained against kinsmen ushers in evil and pernicious associations which flow in from outside to fill the vacant room...Indeed it is our very need, which welcomes and seeks friendship and comradeship, that teaches us to honour and cherish and keep our kin, since we are unable and unfitted by Nature to live friendless, unsocial, hermits' lives. (*Mor.* 478D-479C)

Factionalism and strife can only serve to undermine and destroy the body—the kinship relationship—according to Plutarch, whereas maintaining a suitable balance of respect and honour engenders concord and peace.[1]

Ancient writers employing the metaphor were consistent in describing similar body-parts. Hands and feet were regularly employed,[2] as were eyes and ears.[3] Both Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom cite all four (with Plutarch adding the nostrils,[4] and Dio Chrysostom adding

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[1] Plutarch quotes Sophocles to the effect that the relationship between brothers "is yoked in honour's bonds not forged by man" (*Mor.* 482A). On brotherhood in Plutarch, see Aasgaard 1997.
[2] Arist. *Pol.* 3.6.4; Plut. *Mor.* 797E; Epictetus 2.5.24, 2.10.4; Dion. Hal. 6.86.1-2; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 50.4 (feet, eyes); Xen. *Mem.* 2.3.19 (hand, feet, eyes).
[3] Plato *Rep.* 1.24A-D (eyes, ears, soul); Dio Chrys *Or.* 1.32; 39.5 (eyes, ears, tongues, mind).
[4] *Mor.* 478D.

the tongue[1]). Other common body parts were the head,[2] and belly.[3] A few more were less common.[4] Paul's employment of the hand, foot, ear, eye, and head in his metaphor (12:14-26), demonstrates that he is wholly consistent within his social and literary world in using this common topos to urge for unity among the Corinthian congregation.[5] However, Paul develops his topos in a surprising and unexpected direction. As noted above, the metaphor was often used to overcome factionalism or enmity within a group by urging members of the subordinate classes not to disrupt the status-quo, but here it is used (albeit in a more complex way) to argue for the necessity both of diversity within the body (vv. 14-20) and of a mutuality-of-need among the constituent members (vv. 21-26; cf. Rom 12:4-8). The analogy is employed not to keep subordinates in their place but to urge members of the community to respect and value the contributions of those who appear to be their inferiors (whether in social status or in the manifestation of certain spiritual gifts, or both). As Margaret Mitchell recognizes (1991:161), "There can be no doubt that 1 Cor 12, which employs the most common *topos* in ancient literature for unity, is a straightforward response to the factionalism within the church community, which is the subject of the entire letter." Paul attempts both to limit the developing factionalism and social-stratification and to reinforce the cohesion of the congregation by using the metaphor of the body; and in it he explicitly employs the language of honour-shame.

The apostle begins by reminding each of the Corinthians that through the Spirit they were all baptized into Christ, into what should be a unified body (of Christ), "whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free" (12:12-13). Introducing the body metaphor (12:14ff.), Paul then

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[1] *Or.* 3.104-107; cf. Jas 3:5f.
[2] Plut. *Galb.* 4.2.3; Dion. Hal. 6.86.1-2.
[3] Livy 2.32.9-12; Dion. Hal. 6.86.1-2.
[4] Plato (*Tim.* 70Bff.) mentions the heart, lungs and liver; Livy (2.32.9-12) the teeth and blood/veins; Dion. Hal. (6.86.1-2) the shoulders and mouth. Cicero (*Off.* 3.5) simply mentions "bodily members."
[5] See the use of the body metaphor in 1 Clem. 37ff. (clearly following that of Paul).

allows some of the different anatomical parts to articulate individual perspectives upon their own perception of the body (12:14ff.). The foot (comparing itself with the hand), and the ear (comparing itself with the eye) may speak from a sense of inferiority and perhaps feel that they are not welcome in the body when they pronounce "I do not belong to the body" (12:15, 16). Here, Paul may well be voicing the thoughts of those whose manifestations of the Spirit were considered by others to be inferior and so of less worth.[1] Such people may have felt demeaned and would certainly have experienced a sense of shame, while others may have felt an appropriation of greater honour in their "superior" spiritual status. In response, Paul employs the metaphor to reiterate what he has already elucidated in spiritual terms—that the different kinds of gifts, service, and spiritual workings are given for the common good, and God is at work in all of them (12:4-7). In terms of the analogy, "God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be" (12:18, NIV). Paul's insistence that this is part of the divine plan means that each bodily part (and each spiritual gift) is important, has a purpose, and so has value in the eyes of God. It also means that the lack of any particular gift makes no-one less a member of the body for the body is not simply one organ but, rather, exists as a variety of interdependent parts, each of them necessary. Paul's stress here is on the vital necessity of variety and diversity within a structured unity.

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[1] Contra Fee (following Grosheide) who maintains that Paul is not here concerned with feelings of inferiority or superiority between parts of the body (1987:610-611; Horrell 1996:179-180 follows Fee). But one must ask why a body-part should consider itself not to be a member of the body, or, indeed, why it should not *wish* to be considered a member of the body. In applying the metaphor to the Christ-movement (as is its function, vv. 12-13, 27ff.), the same question remains, why should a believer not consider him/herself, or *wish* to be so considered, a member of the body of Christ? Paul uses the metaphor to highlight the social forces at work and his aim, in doing so, is "that there may be no division in the body, but [that] the members may have the same care for one another" (v. 25). Such a summary may be taken not only as a suitable conclusion to the body-metaphor as a whole (and hence to be applicable to vv. 14-20), but *also* as a reference to the internal factionalism and enmity already evidenced in the letter up to this point. The metaphor is not used in isolation but to point to an underlying social reality, and an appropriate reason why certain people may prefer not to be associated with the body of Christ is through feelings of rejection and inferiority.

In 1 Cor 12:21-26, Paul allows the bodily parts to speak again. This time the eye and the head speak with a sense of arrogance when they express the view that they alone are the "superior" members of the body and have no need for other, lowly, inferior members. The eye says to the hand, "I have no need of you," and the head says the same to the feet.[1] But Paul takes issue with such sentiments for he claims, "the parts of the body which seem to be ἀσθενέστερα are indispensable [ἀναγκαῖά]" (12:22). The majority of translations simply take ἀσθενής as "weaker" (RSV, NRSV, NASU, NIV, KJV), even though the hands and feet in many contexts could hardly be considered "weaker" than the eyes and head.[2] Rather, considering that Paul is about to articulate his understanding of the bodily parts using the language of honour, the sense of ἀσθενής here is more likely to represent the notion of being "insignificant" (LSJ I/3), "without influence" (BAGD 2c), "least important" (LB), or "unimpressive."[3] Such sentiments would then correlate with Paul's inversions of this theme earlier in the letter where he associates weakness both with the cross (1:27; cf. 4:10), and with his own apostleship (9:22). The analogy which the body-metaphor makes with the honour-shame social forces at work within the congregation imply that, once again, those who feel themselves to be "honoured" with superior pneumatic gifts are bringing shame upon those whose gifts they feel are of little consequence and are promulgating the attitude that these "unimpressive" gifts are of no real need or benefit.

Paul's use of ἀναγκαῖά to describe what were considered by some to be the unimpressive parts of the body is also of significance, for in the Greco-Roman texts the term was typically associated with those bodily parts (such as the head and the belly) which stood as a representation of the social elite. Such texts usually employ the body metaphor within a

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[1] Neyrey (1986:155) writes, "From the point of view of body symbolism, "head" denotes high position, rank, and authority." Cf. Malina 1993:40.
[2] Thiselton 2000:1006-1007.
[3] So, NAS Gk/Heb dictionary.

context of demonstrating that these were the most necessary and unexpendable parts.[1] The appropriation of this "high-status" term to describe the "*low-status*" bodily parts is, once again, part of Paul's strategy of status-reversal subsumed within what he claims is the divine plan.

In 12:22-24 Paul demarcates three groups of body-parts, the ἀσθενέστερα, the ἀτιμότερα, and the ἀσχήμονα, but he neither distinguishes clearly their relationship to each other, nor does he enlighten us as to which body parts would be placed into which category. Nevertheless, the first and third groups are perhaps a little clearer than the second. The adversative force of the connective ἀλλὰ πολλῷ μᾶλλον in v. 22, allows one to assume that the ἀσθενέστερα must include the hand and feet of v. 21 (and perhaps others[2]), and the use of ἀσχήμων (employed in the LXX with the sense of dishonour,[3] or of sexual shame[4]), suggests that here in 12:23 (a NT hapax) the term may be taken as a reference to the sexual organs.[5] Paul asserts that it is socially proper for body-parts such as these to remain publicly covered and, in this way, are treated with "special modesty" (NIV).[6] The second group, however, remains ambiguous, for the reference to the ἀτιμότερα is left undefined; Paul may simply imply that those parts which appear to be undistinguished and less worthy are in fact accorded the greater honour of having important functions or receiving special attention.[7]

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[1] So, D. B. Martin 1995:95; cf. Arist. *Pol.* 3.6.2. Following Paul, cf. 1 Clem. 37.5.
[2] Witherington (1995:259) suggests that this group may include the "tender inner organs."
[3] 2 Macc 9.2; Wis 2.20.
[4] Gen 34:7; Dt 24:1; Sus 63.
[5] So, Fee 1987:613-614; Witherington 1995:259; Horrell 1996:180-181; Hays 1997:216; Thiselton 2000:1008; John Chrysostom *Hom. 1 Cor.* 31.425f.
[6] In 12:23 it is not the ἀσχήμονα which are granted "greater honour" but the ἀτιμότερα a point overlooked by Fee 1987:613f.; D. B. Martin 1995:95; Witherington 1995:259; and Hays 1997:216. The "shame" of the genitalia is brought out in Ps-Sall. *Rep.* 9.2: "Has Lucius Domitius great strength? A man whose every member is stained with disgrace or crime, of lying tongue, blood-stained hands, and fleeing feet, most dishonourable in those parts which cannot honourably be named."
[7] Witherington (1995:259) claims that honour is bestowed upon certain parts for they were given "the most crucial of functions, that is, reproduction." But the ambiguity in the text makes such a claim uncertain.

The apostle appears to assume that the recipients of the letter will understand the complexities of his metaphor, while the modern reader is left somewhat in the dark.

But Paul's overall point is perfectly clear. The appearance and apparent function of a bodily part is deceptive and can allow no prescriptive ranking in terms of honour. It is God alone who is fully cognizant of bodily function and it is he alone who allocates rankings of honour.[1] In the divine plan there is an overturning of presuppositions related to the import, purpose and value of all bodily members, "...God has so composed the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another" (vv. 24b-25). As a result, no bodily member can attempt to shame another by declaring it to be of no worth; all are vital to one another and there is mutual need in order for the body to function effectively.[2] Hence, within the two sections of the metaphor (vv. 14-20 and 21-26), Paul has articulated the opposing perspectives of both the "insignificant" parts who feel a sense of shame in their "lack," and the "greater" parts who feel themselves to be supremely honoured.

Applying the analogy to the Christ-movement implies that the "weak," those with unimpressive or insignificant spiritual gifts—those who may even be despised—are of sufficient worth in the divine plan as to warrant greater honour from God. In this way Paul validates the legitimacy and importance of all spiritual gifts, for they are indispensable to the healthy functioning of the community. The metaphor has relativized the self-importance of those who consider themselves to have the "greater/more prestigious" spiritual gifts, and

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[1] D. B. Martin asserts that, in Paul's thinking, "The genitals...are actually the most necessary of the body's members, those with the *highest* status" (1995:95, italics his). But the text makes no claims to reveal which body part should be granted the *highest* status, and such a revelation would, in any case, undermine Paul's whole rhetorical argument. All of the members of the three groups (the ἀσθενέστερα, the ἀτιμότερα, and the ἀσχήμονα) lack honour and so are granted "greater honour" in the divine dispensation. Martin's thesis implies that Paul is wholly preoccupied with thoughts of the sexual organs, an idea which has little basis in the text.

[2] See Neyrey 1990:62.

Paul's explicit re-focussing upon the community in vv. 27-30 serves to remind the Corinthians that, as already noted in vv. 7-13, there is a divine plan of diversity which characterizes the oneness of the congregation. The Christ-movement as a corporate group is the "body of Christ," viz., a "body" which belongs to Christ,[1] and each individual believer, as a member of that body, has been appointed to a different role and function within the community (and has been equipped accordingly). Hence, the import of v. 28: it is God alone who appoints the multiplicity of spiritual gifts and equips the congregation with such diversity for a reason.

Paul's development of the topos is unique in its vision of the "body" as the "body of Christ," a concept which stands in direct contrast with its normative use as some kind of socio-political organism (12:12, 27).[2] Such imagery then allows the apostle to incorporate two other significant topoi within his discussion, the themes of co-suffering and co-rejoicing ("If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together," 1 Cor 12:26). Both were used in antiquity to stress the need for political unity and solidarity.[3] In honour-shame terms, disunity and factionalism could only bring dishonour upon a political organization, whereas a unified mutually-encouraging political organization was envied and therein its members appropriated greater honour. In an encomium on friendship, Dio Chrysostom elucidates the consequences of such unity within a "friendly association," "For is that man not most blessed who has many bodies with which to be happy when he experiences a pleasure, many souls with which to rejoice when he is fortunate? And if glory be the high goal of the ambitious, he may achieve it through the

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[1] See Hays 1997:213; on the holiness of the body, Neyrey 1986:157.

[2] "Body of Christ" imagery is found at a number of places in 1 Corinthians, and is, alongside the metaphor of the building, the predominant image in Paul's extended argument for unity (1 Cor 6:12-20; 10:14-22; 11:29; cf. 1:13). Paul also emphasises at this point that the source of all spiritual gifts to be through the "one Spirit" (12:7-11).

[3] See Malina 1993:45-48.

eulogies of his friends."[1] Above all, of course, Paul emphasises the pre-eminence of love, which he will expound in 1 Cor 13. All spiritual gifts are irrelevant outside of the context of love. To this end the multiplicity of gifts are given for the "common good" (συμφέρω, 12:7[2]) and for the honour of the body as a whole (v. 26).

4.3.3 1 Cor 14: Spiritual Gifts and Honour

The sources by which the Corinthian Christ-movement came to understand and perceive spiritual gifts are most likely multifarious. At a number of points in 1 Corinthians Paul mentions the traditions and teaching that he has passed on (1 Cor 1:5-6; 2:1; 11:2, 23; 15:1, 3ff.) which, significantly, included a display of spiritual power (2:4). In an earlier letter, Paul had elevated the status of spiritual gifts when he urged the Thessalonians neither to quench the Spirit nor to despise prophesying or prophetic utterances (1 Thess 5:19-20), and, likewise, here in 1 Corinthians he advocates an eager desiring of spiritual gifts (12:31; 14:1, 39). In addition to Pauline teaching, the Judeans, Gentile God-fearers, and former pagans who now made up the nascent community would have brought influences from a number of disparate sources: the writings of the Old Testament and intertestamental period; possibly knowledge of the Qumran or wider Essene community; the Gospel traditions; and the Greco-Roman prophetic-oracular context.[3] This section will make a cursory investigation of these various social contexts to examine the significance, if any, which a demonstration of divine discourse may have had on status and honour.

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[1] *Or* 3.108-109.

[2] 1 Cor 12:7; cognates appear in 6:12; 7:35; 10:23, 33; 2 Cor 8:10; 12:1. The term συμφέρω is used regularly by ancient writers in the context of a "body" metaphor; see also Arist *Pol* 3.5.4; and cf. Dion. Hal. 8.44.2.

[3] On these see esp. Dunn 1975; Hill 1979; Grudem 1982; Aune 1983; R. P. Martin 1984; Forbes 1995; Turner 1996. For this section, the nomenclature of "tongues" and "prophecy" will be employed where explicit, but the more general term "oracular speech-act(s)" will be used where the precise nature of the discourse is unclear

From the establishment of the prophetic line of Moses and Aaron in the OT (Ex 7:1), the prophetic office, although typically small in number, was one of high standing.[1] In some texts, the prophet was designated "man of God"—a title of distinction given to some of the great prophet-leaders such as Moses (Dt 33:1), David (Neh 12:24, 36), and especially Elisha.[2] Moses, the superlative figure of Israelite tradition, was unequivocally recognized as the greatest prophet (Dt 34:10).[3] The line of OT prophecy continued through such figures as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, and the Major and Minor Prophets, many of whom were accorded high status within their own lifetimes[4] but more especially in later Judean,[5] Rabbinic,[6] and NT tradition.[7] David Aune writes, "The canonization of the Hebrew scriptures, a process largely completed during the first century BC, had the effect of elevating classical Israelite prophecy to a unique, sacrosanct, and paradigmatic status."[8]

Reflection upon prophetic or oracular speech-acts within the literature of the intertestamental period is rather varied. There was a school of thought (continuing on into the rabbinic period) which maintained that prophecy had actually ceased in the time of Ezra and would not return until the last days.[9] Nevertheless, there is much evidence in Judean sources from both sides of the Common Era which suggests that prophecy was still active

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[1] Ex 7:1; Num 11:29; Dt 18:15, 18ff. See also Hill 1979:11-25; Aune 1983:81-101; Turner 1996:1-18.
[2] It is predicated 29x of Elisha and 15x of the unnamed prophet of Judah in 1 Ki 13:1-31.
[3] Cf. Philo *Mos.* 2.192.
[4] Note especially, (on Samuel) 1 Sam 3:19-4:1; 7:15ff.; 12:18; (on Elijah)1 Ki 18:7; (on Elisha) 2 Ki 2:15; (on Saul) 1 Sam 10:10-12.
[5] Philo *Her.* 258-267; Jos. *C. Ap.* 1.29-40.
[6] Cf. *m. Shebu* 2.2; *Ab* 1.1.
[7] The Gospel traditions refer to the OT prophets in ways which indicate that the prophets were considered the key leaders of ancient Israel, Lk 6:23; 10:24; 11:47; 16:16; cf. Mt 7:22; Lk 13:28.
[8] 1983:81. On the canonization of the prophetic books see Schürer 3.317-321; on their reading of as part of the synagogue service, Schürer 2.448-454.
[9] 1 Macc. 4:46; 9:27; 14:41; *Syb. Or.* 1.385; *Num. Rab.* 15.10; *b. Yoma* 9b, 21b; *t. Sota* 13.2-4; *'Abot* 1; Jos. *C. Ap.* 1.41; Hill 1979:21-25; Gray 1993:8-16. Although divine revelation through an inspired prophet was viewed to have ceased, it was not altogether absent for it now came in oracular form through a heavenly voice or sound, cf. *t. Sotah* 13.2.

and was highly esteemed.[1] Of the intertestamental literature, the book of Sirach has much to say concerning prophecy and the prophet. The prose-hymn at the end of Sirach, for example, reflects upon and extols the praise of the famous men of OT tradition, including the prophet,

> Let us now sing the praises of famous men, our ancestors in their generations. The Lord apportioned to them great glory, his majesty from the beginning. There were those who ruled in their kingdoms, and made a name for themselves by their valor; those who gave counsel because they were intelligent; those who spoke in prophetic oracles; those who led the people by their counsels and by their knowledge of the people's lore; they were wise in their words of instruction...all these were honored in their generations, and were the pride of their times. Some of them have left behind a name, so that others declare their praise. But of others there is no memory; they have perished as though they had never existed; they have become as though they had never been born, they and their children after them. But these also were godly men, whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten...Their offspring will continue forever, and their glory will never be blotted out. Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name lives on generation after generation. The assembly declares their wisdom, and the congregation proclaims their praise. (Sir 44.1-15)[2]

Sirach also claims that for "all who seek wisdom" the Lord will "pour out teaching like prophecy,"[3] and that the wise man "will be filled with the spirit of understanding" and "will pour forth words of wisdom of his own." In this, "The Lord will direct his counsel and knowledge, as he meditates on his mysteries." The result of being perceived as a prophet, according to the author, is that it serves to enhance a man's status and honour, for "Many will praise his understanding; it will never be blotted out. His memory will not disappear, and his name will live through all generations. Nations will speak of his wisdom, and the congregation will proclaim his praise. If he lives long, he will leave a name greater than a

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[1] So, Aune 1983:103ff.; Gray 1993:26-34; Turner 1996:12-17.
[2] See also Sir 45.6-16 on the prophetic ministry of Aaron.
[3] Sir 24.32-34.

thousand."[1] In short, Sirach concludes that the, "One who is wise among his people will inherit honor, and his name will live forever."[2]

The *Testament of Job* also demonstrates that oracular speech-acts were known within intertestamental Judean literature and that such acts were recognized as being gifts of divine origin.[3] At the end of his life, Job distributes his earthly estate amongst his sons for their inheritance, but to his three daughters he presents three multicoloured cords "whose appearance was such that no man could describe, since they were not from earth but from heaven."[4] After wrapping the cords about their bodies each daughter speaks in turn, Hemera "spoke ecstatically in the angelic dialect, sending up a hymn to God in accord with the hymnic style of the angels;" the second daughter, Kasia, spoke in "the dialect of the archons;" and finally, the third daughter, Amaltheia's Horn, "spoke ecstatically in the dialect of those on high...for she spoke in the dialect of the cherubim."[5] The three were said to bless and glorify God, "each in her own distinctive dialect," and the author notes that these divine oracular "hymns" would be written down "so that these things would be preserved, for these are the magnificent things of God."[6] The cords themselves, described as the protective amulets of the Father, would also have the power to lead the women "into the better world, to live in the heavens."[7] Hence, the oracular speech-acts designate a superior inheritance for the three women which serves to raise their status vis-à-vis their seven brothers who receive only worldly goods.[8]

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[1] Sir 39.1-11.
[2] Sir 37.26; cf. *Ps.-Philo* 18.12.
[3] On the hearing of heavenly oracular speech, see also *2 En.* 17; 19; and the later Pauline tradition of 2 Cor 12:4. Cf. Rev 14:3.
[4] *T. Job* 46.7-8.
[5] *T. Job* 48.3-50.3.
[6] *T. Job* 52.7; 51.4.
[7] *T. Job* 47.3, 11.
[8] *T. Job* 46.1-4. On scholarly opinion relating to this section, see the extensive notes and bibliog. of Spittler in *OTP* 1.864-868.

Prophecy is evidenced in a range of other Judean literature. In the writings of the Qumran community, for example, the Teacher of Righteousness may not have used the term "prophet" of himself, but he certainly functioned as a prophet. He was taught by God and spoke from the mouth of God (1QpHab 2:2-3), and he was the one to whom God had "made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets" (7:4-5).[1] Of the wider Essene community both Josephus and Philo wrote glowingly, and Josephus attests the close relationship of their lifestyle with the presence of prophecy among the group, "There are some among them who profess to foretell the future, being versed from their early years in holy books, various forms of purification and apophthegms of prophets; and seldom, if ever, do they err in their predictions."[2] Josephus himself spoke prophetically on occasion,[3] and claimed in his own day that one should "esteem nothing more advantageous than the gift of prophecy."[4] Philo, too, appears to have regarded himself a prophet,[5] and his reflection on prophecy led him to believe that it had been available to every good Israelite and was still available to "every good man."[6]

In the NT, all four Gospel writers preface their introduction of Jesus with an account of John the Baptist; the popular and charismatic prophet who was surrounded by a community of disciples that continued to revere him even after his death.[7] The Synoptic Gospels present him as a prophet in the line of the great prophets of Israel,[8] and Luke writes

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[1] Cf. Vermes (1995:87): "...at some point in the sect's history the coming of the Prophet was no longer expected; he was believed to have already appeared in the person of the Teacher of Righteousness." See also Hill 1979:37-43; Aune 1983:132-135.
[2] *War* 2.159.
[3] *War* 3.400-408; Gray 1993:35-79; cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 5.
[4] *Ant.* 8.418. Further on the writings of Josephus, see Gray 1993.
[5] *Migr.* 35; *Cher.* 27.
[6] *Her.* 259.
[7] Mt 3:1-12; 11:2-19; 14:5; 17:10-13 (and //); Jn 1:19-36; Lk 1:5-80; Acts 19:1-7; Hill 1979:43-47; Aune 1983:129-132. Josephus (*Ant.* 18.116-117) describes John as a "good man" (ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα).
[8] Mt 17:10-13; Lk 1:67-80; 3:10-18; and sartorial parallels with Elijah (1 Ki 19:19; 2 Ki 1:18; 2:13-14; Zech 13:4), Mt 3:4; Mk 1:6.

that the angelic prophetic announcement over the unborn child confirms that "he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah."[1] But in the Gospel narratives John simply prepares the way for the one who would be the prophet *par excellence*, Jesus himself.[2] He is similar to Jeremiah (Mt 16:14), a "prophet like one of the prophets of long ago" (Mk 6:15), a "great" or "mighty" prophet through whom "God has visited his people" (Lk 7:16; 24:19).[3] Not only is he perceived and recognized as such by the Evangelist and others, but in one of the few sayings preserved in all four Gospels, Jesus applies the proverb of the prophet rejected in his native land to himself.[4] So, too, at the commencement of his ministry Jesus is pictured as receiving a vision analogous to a prophet's call—the same spirit that he received in baptism would be understood in a Judean context as the spirit that made one a prophet—and more, "the import of the vision is that *from that time the Spirit will be with Jesus as the power to exercise the messianic task.*"[5] Jesus is also described as having apocalyptic visions (Lk 10:18) and even of delivering prolonged apocalyptic discourses (Mk 13, and //'s). Without doubt, Jesus' prophetic ministry designates him as someone through whom God is at work in a miraculous way (even to the extent of pointing to his messianic status[6]). And if, as Jesus is noted as proclaiming, a prophet has little honour within his own hometown,[7] behind this must lie the assumption that a prophet ought, in general, to receive such honour in lieu of being a spokesperson for the divine. As Jesus is the prophet *par excellence* then,

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[1] Lk 1:17; and see Turner 1996:22-23.
[2] So, Hill 1979:56.
[3] Mt 16:14; 21:11; cf. 26:68; Mk 6:15; 8:28; 14:65; Lk 7:16; 9:8, 19; 24:19; Jn 4:19, 44; 9:17 (Jesus is the only person designated as a prophet in John's Gospel); Hill 1979:48-69; Aune 1983:153-169; Turner 1996:19-35.
[4] Mt 13:57; Mk 6:4; Lk 4:24; cf. 13:33; Jn 4:44.
[5] So, Turner 1996:28 (italics his); Mt 3:13-17; cf. Isa 6:1-10, and the significance of 6:9-10 in the Gospel narratives; Mk 4:10-12 (//'s).
[6] Mt 16:16 and //'s; Jn 7:26, 31, 40-41.
[7] Mt 13:57; Jn 4:44; cf. *Gos. Thom.* 31.

within the public perception of many of his followers, he is ascribed superlative honour and status.

Finally, in the Greco-Roman context, the prophet was a familiar figure amongst the populace and was considered to be a divinely inspired spokesperson for the gods.[1] The spectrum of prophetic experiences ranged from a restrained and sombre declaration of the divine message to enigmatic utterances, trances, frenzied behaviour, and loss of consciousness.[2] The well-known prophetesses of Delphi and Sibyl sometimes spoke in obscure or cryptic speech,[3] while the rites of Dionysius and Cybele could involve a trancelike state and unintelligible speech (frequently in the form of cries or shouting).[4] Knowledge of the oracular speech-acts at Delphi may have had a particular influence on the city of Corinth for it lay only fifty kilometres away and both centres had a close connection with Apollo, the god of prophecy (Corinth had a temple of Apollo).[5] So, too, Corinth was a major centre of the Dionysiac cult. It is quite possible, therefore, that the Corinthian Christ-followers' *initial social perceptions* of oracular speech-acts may have been influenced, or even wholly understood within the context of their immediate cultural milieu—i.e., that such discourse represented a manifestation of the presence of the divine and so imbued a speaker with authority, presence, and honour. Certainly, there is no evidence that the ancients viewed such speech-acts as a sign of irrationality or of lack of education or social standing. To the contrary, D. B. Martin (1991, 1995) has compiled an extensive body of literature from the ancient world (Greco-Roman, Judean, and from the early Christ-movement) which

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[1] See Callan 1985:128, 139.
[2] Aune 1983:23-79; Forbes 1995.
[3] On the Pythia, Plut. *Mor* 759B; 763A; Luc. *Civil War* 5.153ff., 166ff.; on the Sibyl, Virgil. *Aen.* 6.46ff. See Forbes 1995:107-109.
[4] On Dionysius, Eur. *Bacch.* 1051-1075, 1095-1136; Livy 39.8.5-8; 39.10.7; 39.13.12-13; 39.15.9-10; on Cybele, Diod. Sic. 3.57-59, 63ff.; 4.3.3; Forbes 1995:124-148.
[5] Although the Delphic oracle was certainly past the peak of its influence at the time of Paul it was still functioning. On the Delphic oracle, see Witherington 1995:278ff.; Forbes 1995.

reveals that prophetic discourse, and other oracular speech-acts of the type mentioned above, were often considered to be an overt sign of exalted "spirituality" and so a symbol of high status.[1] In concluding his studies he asserts, "All these references to angelic language or esoteric speech portray it as unequivocally high-status behaviour, often connected with leadership roles."[2] And with particular reference to 1 Corinthians, he writes that, although his survey cannot be taken as proof that the Corinthian speakers in tongues were themselves higher-status members of the community there, "...it does suggest that they *may* have been, given that people in Greco-Roman society regularly associated esoteric speech with other high-status indicators" (1995:91, italics his). Martin may or may not be correct on this last point (the text of 1 Corinthians tells us nothing about the social status of those involved in divine discourse), but we need not follow Martin in simply *assuming* that glossolalia in the Christ-movement at Corinth was done only by those of high-status; Hollenweger and Theissen, for example, maintain that glossolalia may have exerted greater attraction for the less educated and the 'weak.'[3] What is of greater significance for our understanding here is that within the context of Greco-Roman thought, divine discourse could certainly *promote* one's status within a community and, hence, was to be seen as a vital source of improving one's honour.[4]

In summarizing this section it is clear that in *each* of these disparate contexts there is unmistakeable evidence that those exhibiting gifts of divine discourse were accorded some kind of high status and, hence, that public recognition of such speech was a sign of honour.

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[1] D. B. Martin maintains (1995:90) that in only one work (Celsus' description of Christ-followers in *Cels.* 7.10) was glossolalia perceived as low-status activity, but notes that here, of course, Celsus' polemical depreciation of Christ-followers means that his writing cannot be accepted as impartial.

[2] 1995:90; also p. 87 and 1991:556, 558.

[3] Hollenweger 1982:28-31; Theissen 1987:301; cf. 300-304.

[4] Note Paul's thankfulness to God that he speaks in tongues more than all of the Corinthians (1 Cor 14:18), recognizing that they delight in the self-importance and superiority that this brings.

4.3.4 Spiritual Gifts in Corinth

Returning to the text of 1 Corinthians, the above evidence for associating oracular speech-acts with status embellishment now makes good sense of the situation outlined in chapters 12-14, both within the wider social context and within the letter as a whole. It is the φυσιοῖ (1 Cor 13:4; and 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1) who are seeking honour through status-improvement in placing a high value upon prophecy and especially tongues, the esoteric language of angels (13:1). After all, if such gifts were considered to be manifest proof that God was present in the speaker (14:25), then they would have been considered entirely appropriate for those supposedly gifted with spiritual illumination and divine wisdom (8:1-2).[1] These Corinthian "charismatics" may well have been those who were also claiming the special γνῶσις which elevated them above others within the community in various other ways as well. But, in this, they may have believed that they were simply following the example of Paul himself (though possibly now superseding him), for Paul founded the community with a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (2:4) which most certainly included a manifestation of glossolalia (14:18), and perhaps included a display of some of the spiritual gifts listed in 12:8-10. Here, Paul may have been seen not simply as the charismatic founder-leader who encouraged the community in the gifts of the Spirit, but, perhaps more significantly for the honour-seeking believers, as the role-model in exhibiting the gift of tongues.[2]

Certainly, it would appear from chs. 12-14 as a unit, that the inarticulate utterances of glossolalia were assumed by many to be the highest spiritual gift and that manifestation of it was a means of gaining prestige and stature within the community. But herein was a

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[1] On the manifestation of glossolalia as a sign of ascribed (i.e., divinely given), or acquired (i.e., self-achieved, 1 Cor 4:7) honour, see Neyrey 1990:128-130.

[2] On the model of the charismatic leader espoused by Max Weber, see Gerth/Mills 1970.

fundamental problem, for if tongues-speech could grant someone special recognition, even a status of some distinction,[1] and if it could also be voluntarily controlled (14:28), then it could also be manipulated to serve one's own purpose; that is, in the absence of interpreters, such speech could move to a point of being exaggerated, or even falsified.[2] If glossolalia presented an opportunity for status improvement within the community—and one needs to remember that such manifestations were wholly public—then it is quite easy to see how an antagonistic environment could arise whereby those who had the "gift" of tongues-speech may have used (or abused) such a gift in the determination to accrue greater prestige and honour. Certainly, the use/misuse of tongues would have created an unhealthy distinction of status amongst the congregation (and especially as it is clear that there were those within the community who did not manifest the gift of tongues at all, 12:30; 14:5).

That the practices of the tongue-speakers appeared uncontrolled and excessive is highlighted in Paul's hypothetical depiction of unbelievers entering a congregational meeting and being confronted by the *whole* community speaking in tongues, "will they not say that you are mad?" (μαίνεσθε, 14:23). Such a statement points towards a tendency of collective uncontrolled utterances by the tongue-speakers. But Paul does not mean here that the visitor will simply consider the Corinthians "mad" (so, ASV, KJV, RSV, NASU) or even "out of [their] mind" (so, NKJV, NIV, NRSV) in the modern psycho-analytical use of the word. Rather, the outsider may ascribe to the congregation a ritual *mania*—a fit of

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[1] Murphy-O'Connor 1979:128; Meeks 1983:119-120. This is true, also, of modern research into glossolalia. For the application of this in NT studies see esp. Esler 1994:37-51; Turner 1996:303-314. Esler (1994:42) summarizes the work of F. D. Goodman (1972) and paraphrases one of her conclusions, "The fact that glossolalia is interpreted as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit inevitably results in its being a matter of prestige for those members of the community who have exhibited it. Conversely, a person who had been a member of a congregation for some time without producing glossolalia might be criticised on the basis that he or she was too sinful to receive it."

[2] C. Bonner (1929) presents a discussion on how some people in ancient Corinth might have acquired power though manipulating a special 'miraculous' phenomenon.

religious "ecstasy"—similar to other contemporary mystery cults such as Dionysius, Cybele, the Bacchanals, or the Delphic oracle.[1] Paul is well aware of this and so insists on restricting states of collective glossolalia in order to create a hearing for other members of the congregation (1 Cor 14:26, 33).[2]

Paul begins to address the issue in a subtle way. While he expresses a high regard for the gifts of the Spirit (cf. 12:31; 14:1), commits himself to prophetic utterances (14:18), and concludes with a warning not to suppress it (14:39); in reality he strives to correct its excessive evaluation in Corinth and to counteract the undisciplined practices of the tongues-speakers. He claims that even though tongue-speakers may edify themselves (14:4), since no-one understands them they he brings no profit or benefit to the community (14:2, 6)—Paul's comparison is that glossolalia is similar to a "lifeless thing" or an "indistinct sound" (14:7-8).[3] Indeed, uninterpreted glossolalia is simply "speaking into the air" and leaves the hearer as distant as a foreigner or barbarian (14:9, 11). Paul's conclusions are quite stark. Firstly, uninterpreted tongues-speech verge on the childish and immature and, in comparison to a prophetic word, border on the irrelevant (14:18, 20, cf. 13:1, they are akin to noisy gongs and clanging cymbals). Secondly, if there is no likelihood that the inarticulate utterances of tongues-speech will be interpreted, then the tongue-speaker should remain

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[1] On the debate as to whether tongues can be classified as a form of Greco-Roman "ecstatic" speech see esp. Behm *TDNT* 1.722-724; L. T. Johnson 1992:597-598; Currie 1965; Dunn 1975:242-248; Aune 1983:19-21, 33-34, 85-87; Theissen 1987:59-114, 276-341; Forbes 1995:53-73; Thiselton 2000:980-985 (and the literature cited there). Much depends upon terminological definitions. Dunn (1975:243), for instance, concludes that the Corinthians' glossolalia is "...ecstatic only in the technical sense of being automatic speech in which the conscious mind played no part, but not ecstatic in the more common sense of 'produced or accompanied by exalted states of feeling, rapture, frenzy.'"

[2] For reasons of social stability and order within the meetings, Paul also prohibits "speaking" by the women (14:33b-35). The translation, exegesis, and textual history of these verses is complex, see Ellis 1981; Fee 1987; Theissen 1987; S. C. Barton 1986:229-234; Murphy-O'Connor 1986:90-92; Allison 1988; Munro 1988; Wire 1990:149-158; Witherington 1988:90-104, 1995; Ross 1992; Jervis 1995; Payne 1995; Horrell 1996:184-195; Hays 1997:235, 245-49; Niccum 1997; and Thiselton 2000:1146-1162. Whatever the nature of this "speaking," Paul (or a later editor) has realized that it is having a detrimental effect upon community order and is bringing confusion, not peace (14:33a). As such, it brings the Christ-movement into disrepute in the eyes of a potential visitor and can only bring shame upon the community (v. 35).

[3] See further, Theissen 1987:286.

silent (14:28). Such statements may have had a damaging effect on those who prized themselves on speaking in the "tongues of angels" and of uttering the "mysteries" of heaven, for their prized speech-acts were not only undermined but were now limited to the presence of an interpreter. More importantly for Paul, such interpretations were now able to be assessed and qualified by the congregation as a whole. His provisos placed the interpreted tongue-speech into the *public* domain and so into the same public category as the articulate utterances of prophetic speech which had always been open to evaluation and judgment by the community (cf. 14:29).[1] At the same time, Paul encouraged everyone to eagerly seek the gift of prophecy (14:1, 39), a move which further sought to undermine status-distinctions brought about by the elevation of tongues.

In short, certain tongues-speakers would have undoubtedly felt that Paul's statements were an attack on their honour. Their prized status within the community as oracular mouthpieces of the divine was now undermined, and they may even have felt that their credibility was damaged. Certainly, Paul's reasoning in elevating prophecy above tongues (14:1, 5, 6, 19, 24-25, 39), and with it his adumbration on the correct use of prophecy as a gift for encouraging, strengthening, instruction and edification (14:3-5, 19, 31), is a move designed to eradicate the status distinctions of spiritual gifts in favour of a unified, mutually-encouraging, loving community. The building-up of the community is, after all, the central motif of the chapter with the verb (οἰκοδομεῖν) and the noun (οἰκοδομή) occurring seven times in the chapter, including the summary formulations of verses 5, 12, and 26. Paul's guiding principle for the community is found in this final formulation, "Let all things be done for building-up" (v. 26).

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[1] See Chow 1992:184.

4.3.5 Summary

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul employs the metaphor of the body in the aim of unifying a community that is beset by factionalism and enmity and which appears to be on the verge of dividing (1 Cor 1.10, 13; 3.3; 11.18-19). He argues that individual differences should not be a hindrance to unity. On the contrary, interdependence is mutually beneficial and serves to enhance the proper functioning of the Christ-movement as the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul provides an example of where such disunity has led, for the worship practices were disorderly and self-focussed; designed more for individual self-aggrandizement than for the proper upbuilding of the community.

The image of God presented by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 is that he alone is the one who is ultimately in control; it is he who has arranged the body-parts according to his will, it is he who knows of the relative function, value and worth of the individual organs, and it is he who distributes honour accordingly. Such an image is striking, for since it is God who creates and brings together a variety of different individuals the diversity within the community is divinely ordained. Paradoxically, it is this diversity which, if recognized and used correctly, is fundamental to building up the believing community into a rich unity. Paul's deliberation and application of the body-metaphor (12:7-11, 27-30 and chapter 14) is that the comparison between spiritual gifts within the congregation must be made on the basis of συμφέρω and οἰκοδομή—it is these which now constitute the real basis for a new ranking system within the community. God may present and allocate ranks of honour, but it is the principle of οἰκοδομή which in fact lies behind them. Paul's metaphor deracinates all ethnic and social barriers; it is not God's intention that a believing community should be divided, rather, differences should lead not to division, but to mutual concern, care, and love. The closing statement of this section (14:37) demonstrates the urgency with which he

believes that fundamental change is necessary, "If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord."[1]

Paul's discourse, once again, has the effect of inverting the symbolic universe of first-century Greco-Roman ideology. The dominant social order would have deemed it entirely appropriate that honour was granted on the basis of social importance and social "worth," and it is entirely understandable that such attitudes may have filtered into the Christ-movement. Those of higher social standing, those of greater wealth, those granted the "superior" spiritual gifts (perhaps seen as divine acknowledgment of social status), would have expected to receive greater honour as a matter of course. But Paul's rhetoric shatters such perceptions; in the new divine order a new symbolic universe is established wherein it is those who may *appear* to be unimpressive and of no significance—those without honour—who are granted a measure of divine honour from the one who has superlative honour. As Horrell writes, "The language of divine ordering...represents a demand that an alternative pattern of values and relationships be embodied within the ἐκκλησία" (1996:181). God has swept away all culturally-conditioned conceptions of status and honour and has placed them with a framework of συμφέρον, οἰκοδομή and ἀγάπη.[2] But such a move, within an honour-shame culture, does not simply establish an "equality" of honour within the community,[3] for a redistribution of honour would actually bring with it dishonour, that is, a profound sense of shame, for those who had previously thought themselves to be

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[1] Dunn (1983:223) writes that this is, "...one of the strongest assertions of Paul's authority anywhere in his letters...it is the only occasion in which he calls his counsel a "command.""

[2] Contra D. B. Martin (1995:96, 102) who asserts, "...we must recognize that those who, on the surface, occupy positions of lower status are actually more essential than those of higher status and therefore should be accorded more honor." Paul's metaphor does not parallel the social realities perfectly, there is no honour granted by God simply *because of* one's previously low status but it is granted through συμφέρω, οἰκοδομή and ἀγάπη. The important point is that the granting of honour is now open to all, regardless of social status and regardless of the spiritual gifts that one has been given.

[3] So, Horrell 1996:182.

honoured.[1] Paul's discourse would perhaps have been shocking and humiliating for a number of the Corinthians. But this is the essence of Paul's command; a new world-view has been established within the Corinthian congregation, bounded within the constraints of love.

The force of the "body-of-Christ" metaphor employed by Paul in 1 Cor 12-14 is entirely consistent with his use of the symbol of Christ's death elsewhere in the letter. For this new world-view has its foundations in the cross of Christ—to which Paul has often appealed in his critique of the Corinthians' factionalism and enmity. The cross reveals the new paradigm of behaviour; one bounded by the love of both God and Christ which the cross reveals. This ideal of love, so clearly articulated in 1 Cor 13 (and strategically located between chs. 12 and 14), is defined supremely in the image of the Christ who demonstrates his love by giving his life in death *for us*. It is clear, therefore, that in 1 Corinthians 1-14, even when Paul does not explicitly appeal to the symbol of Christ's death, his paraenesis is predicated on his understanding of the cross as paradigmatic event, and one which should shape the corporate life of the community to the extent that it corresponds to what the cross represents.[2]

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[1] So, D. B. Martin 1995:96, 102.
[2] See Meeks 1983:93.

4.4 1 Corinthians 15[1]

In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 Paul addresses the fourth and final major issue of contention in Corinth, namely, the resurrection (*out*) *of the dead* (ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν).[2] The internal disagreements within the community appear to involve, firstly, whether or not there *is* an actual ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, and, if so, how this comes about. There is a question, too, on the very nature of the resurrected body. Paul does not bring to their attention any aberrant behaviour as a direct result of their differences of opinion (and this chapter of the letter is the first section where he does not have to do so), but many of the moral failings previously discussed in the letter may have in fact been caused by a misunderstanding of the very issues with which he will now contend. For the heart of Paul's gospel was the death and resurrection of Christ, and 1 Cor 15 provides a fitting climax to many of the strands of thought that have gone before.[3] The apostle clearly understood that any confusion, misconception or misinterpretation on this issue could impinge upon the community's ethical praxis—as it had already done so in Corinth, with devastating results. Conversely, a community fully able to comprehend the heart of Paul's gospel would be well equipped to see the transformation of themselves and their wider community, and so to be a profound witness to the very heart of the gospel—Christ crucified. Hence, at this point in the letter, Paul appears to assume that he has now laid the appropriate foundation of Christ-centred identity and lifestyle (which is in the cross of Christ), and is now able to introduce a theology of the resurrection, which will anchor much of his previous discussion.

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[1] The unity of 1 Cor 15:1-58 is accepted by the vast majority of writers, see Thiselton 2000:1177.

[2] The phrase is repeated 13 times in the chapter (vv. 12 (x2), 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 29 (x2), 32, 35, 42 and 52). I do not intend to enter into here the monism-dualism debate on the nature of the soul, for which see most recently, Brown/Murphy/Malony 1998; Cooper 2000.

[3] DeMaris (1995:677-678) writes, "It is no overstatement to say that Paul's understanding of the resurrection was central to his theology, that chap. 15 of 1 Corinthians is key to interpreting the entire letter."

This chapter will investigate the Hebrew-Judean and Greco-Roman contexts of death and resurrection and will then proceed to an analysis of 1 Corinthians 15, paying particular attention to the nuances of honour-shame.

4.4.1 Hebrew-Judean Context[1]

Early Hebrew thought on physical death appears to assume that it marked, for all people, the end of worth-while existence. Beyond death lay Sheol (LXX ᾅδης), "an undesirable abode of wretched shades,"[2] where the dead know nothing and see nothing.[3] Here, all hope is gone (Ps 143:3; cf. Wis 13.10), and God has no more dealings with the departed, who are forgotten forever (Ps 88:10ff.; Eccl 2:16). The dead in Sheol simply sleep as shades, *rephaim*, in a dark world.[4] Most OT writers appear to deliberately avoid any discussion of the subject, but some do reflect upon the after-life and with it the apparent injustice of death for the righteous (it was assumed that both the righteous and the wicked were destined for this place of misery and desolation).[5] Despite the fact that Hebrew culture was very much immersed in considerations of honour and shame,[6] such was the anticipated horror of Sheol that, in Hebrew thought, "...a living dog is better than a dead lion,"[7] that is, the poorest living wretch was considered better even than the king who abides in Sheol.

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[1] On the following section see esp. Schürer 2.539-546 (and bibliog. 2.539, n. 90); Cavallin 1974; Wedderburn 1987; De Boer 1988; Segal 1997; Bauckham 1998; R. N. Longenecker 1998; Meier 2000; N. T. Wright 2003.
[2] Barrett 1979:70.
[3] Eccl 9:5; Ps 88:3-7, 10-12; Isa 26:14; see also Gen 3:5; Ps 6:5; 16:10; 30:9; 115:17; Isa 38:10f., 18f.; 2 Sam 14:14; Job 3:13f., 17-19. Sheol is at times synonymous with "death" (Gen 42:38; Ps 89:48), the "grave" (Gen 37:35; Isa 14:11), or the "netherworld" (Ezek 32:21). See Yamuachi 1998:43-45.
[4] See Ps 88:10; Prov 2:18; 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; Isa 14:9; 26:14, 19; R. N. Longenecker 1998:8.
[5] Eccl 3:16-21; 9:2-3, 9-10; 12:7; Job 7:9-10; 14:7-22; 30:23; Ps 6:5; 90:3, 10-12; Prov 5:11; Isa 26:14.
[6] See Laniak 1998 and bibliog. there.
[7] Eccl 9:4.

Gradually, however, Hebrew reflection appears to move on from this early stage.[1] No-doubt through a growing individualism and a fundamental belief in the righteous acts of God on behalf of his people, a number of later texts evidence a gradual move towards the concept of life after death.[2] The author of 1 Samuel writes,

> The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. (1 Sam 2:6-8)[3]

Other similar texts would include 1 Sam 28; Ezekiel 37:1-14[4] and Isa 24-27, esp. 26:17-19,[5] the latter of which may well have prefaced Dan 12:1-3, the first explicit reference to resurrection in the OT,

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[1] Strangely, on these early texts N. T. Wright (2003:90) maintains, "It would be wrong to give the impression that the early Israelites were particularly gloomy about all this." He suggests that behind such texts is an affirmation of "the goodness and vital importance of the present created order, which is to be renewed by YHWH, not abandoned" (p. 86). But the natural reading of the texts, and there are many of them, appear to say precisely the opposite. The authors *are* gloomy because they clearly recognize that at certain times there is great injustice in the present created order and they are perplexed as to the precise workings of YHWH in it all. Equally, many of the texts are explicit in their fear that there is no hope for any kind of post-mortem existence. On the *later* Israelite hope of YHWH's faithfulness extending to life beyond the grave, Wright confirms that, "It is impossible now to tell when this idea first made its appearance," and that this belief, "does indeed appear to be a late arrival in its explicit form" (2003:103). Even of some later passages which *appear* to offer divine deliverance from Sheol, Wright has to concede that, "The problem with these passages is to know whether this refers to a deliverance that lies *beyond* Sheol" (p. 103, italics his), and that, "The main hope...seems to be that of rescue from violent death, rather than a deliverance the other side of the grave" (p. 104). Finally, Wright admits that the OT "mostly denies or at least ignores the possibility of a future life, with only a few texts coming out strongly for a different view" (2003:129). Cf. Bauckham (1998a:80-81), who writes that the dead, in Hebrew thought, "...were cut off from God, the source of all life. It is this view, which is not peculiar to Israel but was common to many ancient peoples, that most of the Hebrew Scriptures take for granted." He concludes that, "evidence for a belief in life after death in the Old Testament is, at best, minimal" (p. 81).

[2] See R. N. Longenecker 1998:10-11.

[3] The dating of the work is typically placed at the time of the Babylonian exile or later. On this later Israelite hope see also, Dt 32:39; Ps 16:10; 49:15; 73:24; Isa 2:2-4; 11:1-9; 42:1, 4; Mic 4:1-3; *TDNTW* 118-119.

[4] On the imagery of Ezek 37 see De Boer 1988:44: "The idea of resurrection seems to be purely metaphorical, symbolizing the miracle of national revival by God after the annihilation of His people by foreign powers."

[5] See Barrett 1979; Cavallin 1974; De Boer 1988:42-47; Segal 1997.

> At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book.[1] Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.[2]

Of interest in both texts is the centrality of the notions of honour-shame; these are construed as the respective rewards for the righteous and the wicked. Presumably it is the apostate, the persecutors, and the blasphemers of Dan 11:30-45 whose destiny is utter shame and lasting abhorrence, while it is the righteous who are assured of the opposite, the honour and rewards of eternal life.[3]

The book of Daniel, and with it thoughts of resurrection and life after death, arose within a social context of the persecution of Hellenistic Judeans for maintaining their ancestral faith. In many instances, Judean martyrs accepted death in order to maintain their ethnic identity and its religious beliefs, but in so doing renounced all hope of earthly individual or national reward. It is into this dichotomy that many of the Judean writings of the intertestamental period assert a belief in the resurrection of the dead—or, alternatively, belief in some kind of immortality—and do so within a context of envisioning resurrection and post-mortem existence as one of *honour* for the righteous.[4] In the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* the author articulates Jacob's dying words to his twelve sons and speaks of post-resurrection rewards employing language similar to that of Dan 12,

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[1] The 'Book of Life,' cf. Ex 32:32-33; Ps 69:28.
[2] On this text, see esp. Cavallin 1974:26-27; N. T. Wright 2003:109-115. On the understanding of the "many" (12:2), see Goldingay 1987:308.
[3] Most likely *physical* life, Wedderburn 1987:169; although see Cavallin 1974:28, n. 1.
[4] See Bauckham 1998a:83-84.

> Then shall we also be raised, each of us over our tribe, and we shall prostrate ourselves before the heavenly king. Then all shall be changed, some destined for glory, others for dishonour, for the Lord first judges Israel for the wrong she has committed and then he shall do the same for all the nations. (*T. Ben.* 10.7-8)[1]

Similarly, the Community Rule of Qumran speaks of the *eternal* prospective rewards for the righteous and the endless terror which awaits the wicked,

> And as for the visitation of all who walk in this [righteous] spirit, it consists of healing and abundance of bliss, with length of days and fruitfulness and all blessings without end and eternal joy in perpetual life and the glorious crown and garment of honour in everlasting light...And as for the visitation of all who walk in this [false] spirit, it consists of an abundance of blows administered by all the angels of destruction, in the everlasting pit by the furious wrath of the God of vengeance, of unending dread and shame without end and of the disgrace of destruction by the fire of the regions of darkness. (1 QS 4.6b-8, 11b-14)[2]

And the Ethiopic book of Enoch echoes Dan 12 when the author insists,

> All good things, and joy and honour are prepared for and written down for the souls of those who died in righteousness...Woe unto you sinners who are dead! You yourselves know that they will bring your souls down to Sheol; and they shall experience evil and great tribulation. (*1 En.* 103.3-8)[3]

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[1] On early Judean texts which incorporate notions of honour-shame, see also Wis 4.7, 16; 5.15-16, "But the righteous man, even if he dies an untimely death, will be at rest...Even after his death the just man will shame the godless who are still alive...The righteous live for ever and their reward is in the Lord, and the care of them with the Most High. Therefore they will receive royal splendour, and the diadem of beauty from the Lord's hand." And Philo (*Sacr.* 8) writes of Moses, "He departs to another abode, that you may understand from this that God accounts a wise man as entitled to equal honour with the world itself, having both created the universe, and raised the perfect man from the things of earth up to himself by the same word."

[2] ET Cavallin 1974:60.

[3] Cf. *T. Benj.* 10.6-9. Also, *1 En.* 108.11-15: "And now I will call the spirits of the good who are the generation of light...who in the flesh were not recompensed with honour, as was fitting to their faith. And I will bring out into shining light those who love my holy name, and I will set each one on the throne of his honour. And they will shine for times without number, for righteousness is the judgment of God, for with the faithful he will keep faith in the dwelling of upright paths."

Although the above texts affirm the honour and glory which awaits the righteous after death, what is unclear in many Judean texts of the intertestamental period and beyond is the actual *nature* of the post-mortem existence. Is it simply a spiritual existence or some kind of bodily one too? Unfortunately, there is no clear consensus; some texts affirm only the resurrection of the soul,[1] others include the body too.[2] The Pharisees held to this latter view and maintained, according to Josephus, "Every soul...is imperishable, but the soul of the good alone passes into another body, while the souls of the wicked suffer eternal punishment." The decisive act of salvation for the righteous is the resurrection of a body, i.e., *another* body from the one that has died, although nothing is explained further concerning its nature.[3] Josephus, too, took the same view.[4] Conversely, the Sadducees held to a conscious denial of the resurrection of the dead and of immortality after death. Josephus claimed that they denied the immortality of the soul and postulated that the soul disappeared with the body.[5]

In later rabbinic tradition it was noted that the schools of Shammai and Hillel were in agreement on the *fact* of a resurrected body (making use of Ezekiel 37 and Job 10:9f.), but not its nature. While the school of Shammai maintained that there would be some kind of relationship between the material remains of the dead and their resurrected bodies, the

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[1] Wisdom 1.15 (cf. 9.15); *T. Ash.* 6.5-6; 4 Macc. 14.5-6; 18:23; *4 Ezra* 7.78; *Jub.* 23.31 (on which see Cavallin 1974:38); and Philo *Contempl.* 13 (on the Therapeutae); *T. Dan* 5.11-12 (cf. Heb 11-12); *1 En.* 103.2-8; 104.2; ch. 22. On the Maccabean literature, cf. Bauckham 1998a:83-85, and Green 1998:161-163. Josephus writes of the Essenes, "For it is a fixed belief of theirs that the body is corruptible and its constituent matter impermanent, but that the soul is immortal and imperishable" (*War* 2.154; cf. *Ant.* 18.18). Philo would probably reject the concept of a resurrection of the body. Although he does not mention it specifically (see *Opif.* 77; *Mos.* 2.228), he does state that a "corpse" cannot come into the sight of God (*Fug.* 10-11, cf. 55-59).

[2] 2 Macc 7.9-11; 2 Baruch 48.49-50; 49.2-3; 50.2; 51.1-3, 5; and see esp. De Boer 1988:80-83.

[3] *War* 2.163; cf. *Ant.* 18.14. It is unclear in the above text whether Josephus has in mind metempsychosis (the migration of the soul) or reincarnation, but what is clear is that the Pharisees envisioned another, different kind of body for the imperishable soul. Like Paul, therefore, they assume that the corruptible physical body must take on new incorruptible flesh for post-mortem existence. Other Judean texts which speak of a resurrection of the body include the *Apocryphon of Ezekiel* (cited both in Epiphanius Haer. 64.70.5-17 and *b. Sanh.* 91b); and the Sibylline Oracles 4.171-190.

[4] *War* 3.372ff.; cf. 7.344f.; *Ant.* 17.152-4, 354. See further, N. T. Wright 2003:175-181

[5] Jos. *War* 2.165; *Ant.* 18.16-17; Mk 12:18-23 and //'s; Acts 4:2; 23:8; N. T. Wright 2003:131-140.

Hillelites argued that there would not, maintaining that the resurrection would be a new creation of the body, *ex nihilo*.[1] Many other Judean texts affirm the notion of some kind of resurrection but give few details,[2] still others, are wholly silent on the after-life.[3] *Ben Sira*, a spiritual ancestor of the Sadducees, maintained that there were only two principal ways in which a person could "outlast" death. The first was through children, who represent their parents after death (11:28; 30.4-5; 46:12), and the other was by means of a good reputation (39:9; 41.11-13; 44:8).[4]

In sum, it is clear that a discussion of life after death is not a central theme in all strands of Judean thinking around the time of Paul, and further, there appears to be no agreed Judean doctrine about the after-life. Instead, the texts demonstrate a varied plurality of thought and ideas concerning post-mortem existence.[5] Belief in *some kind* of post-mortem existence was certainly shared by most Palestinian and Diaspora Judeans at the time of Paul, but the acceptance of anything approaching a consensus on thoughts of a resurrection was far from established.[6] Nevertheless, what is also clear is that from the time of the close of the OT period and the text of Daniel 12, to the Judean writings of the first-century CE, the notion of some kind of life after death had become very popular in Judean thought, and with

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[1] *Gen. Rab.* 14.5; *Lev. Rab.* 14.9. Despite the debate, the rabbinic emphasis upon some kind of physical post-mortem existence is clear, *m. Sanh.* 10.1; *m. Sot.* 9.15; *b. Sanh.* 90a-92b; Cavallin 1974:171ff.; N. T. Wright 2003:190-200.

[2] 4 Macc. (cf. 7.3; 9.22; 13.17; 14.5-6; 17.12, 18-19); Wis 1-6; *4 Ezra* 7.32, 60. The Psalms of Solomon speaks of "rising to eternal life" (3.12), but without elaboration. Pseudo-Phocylides uncritically juxtaposes different views: resurrected and deified corpses, the immortality of the souls, Hades as the common home of all the dead (*Sentences* vv. 97-115).

[3] These include, Sir, Jdt, Tob, Aristeas, 1 Bar (which in 2.17 seems to *deny* any afterlife except the "life" of the dead in Hades, who in that state will not be able to glorify God), 1 Macc, 3 Macc, 3 Ezra, *As. Mos.*

[4] See *TDNTW* 121. Bauckham (1998a:82) writes that Ben Sira (early second-century BCE), "is probably the last Judean writer of the Second Temple period of whom it can be confidently stated that he did not expect eternal life and judgment after death."

[5] See Wedderburn 1987:167-168.

[6] See the useful chart provided by Cavallin (1974:197-199) on the variety of Judean thought in this period and see also E. P. Sanders 1992, ch. 14.

it notions of the honour which would be accorded the righteous believer. Such thoughts may well have influenced Paul's understanding of the status of the resurrection body.

4.4.2 Graeco-Roman Context

Early Greek reflection upon post-mortem existence was similar to that of early Hebrew thought. The departed soul (ψυχή)[1] was thought to "exist" in the shadowy world of Hades where life of a sort persisted, and where memory persisted too, much to the chagrin of the departed.[2] In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus is permitted to descend into Hades to speak with Achilles, and attempts to encourage the departed hero, "Formerly, in your lifetime, we Argives used to honour you equally with the gods, and now that you are here you exercise great power over the dead. Do not grieve about it, Achilles, now that you are dead." The reply of Achilles is illuminating, "Do not make light of death to me, noble Odysseus. I would rather be on earth a serf to a landless man, with small enough living for himself, than act as king over all these dead men who have perished."[3] The parallel with Hebrew thought is striking (cf. the above quote of Eccl 9:4: "...a living dog is better than a dead lion"). The Greeks may have at times employed the concept of the dead rising up, but only as a rhetorical absurdity—the dead remained in Hades. When Herodotus refers to the Persian king Cambyses' concern over supposed reports concerning his brother Smerdis (whom the king had ordered to be slain) he places the following reply into the mouth of the assassin Prexaspes, "I did what you commanded me, and buried him [Smerdis] with my own hands.

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[1] Cf. LSJ *sv* II: *the departed soul, spirit, ghost.*
[2] See further, E. Ferguson 1993:228-234.
[3] Hom. *Od.* 11.484-91; and cf. *Il.* 23.65-76, 99-107; 24.549-551; 24.756; *Od.* 24.5ff.

If dead men do rise up you can expect Astyages the Mede[1] to rise up against you; but if things continue as they have been you will never have any further trouble from him."[2]

By the time of the early Roman empire, Greek thought upon post-mortem existence, like that of later Judean thought, appears to have become rather diverse. Ramsay MacMullen's analysis of inscriptions on funerary monuments demonstrates this variety. Some demonstrate a sense of scepticism about any form of afterlife; indeed, one of the commonest epitaphs became so familiar that it was simply used in abbreviation, *n.f.n.s.n.c.* (*non fui, non sum, non curo*; "I was not, I am not, I care not"). Others merely cite clichés on Hades and the underworld.[3] Such attitudes are perhaps also expressed in invocations and sacrifices to the gods which were done, not in hope of eternal life, but for a multitude of earthly benefits: health, virility, a long life, financial success, protection from danger, and healing or safety from some physical illness.[4] Even in the increasingly popular Oriental cults, where the resurrection of a god was part of cultic history, there is no evidence that the initiates expected a similar experience.[5] "Salvation" simply meant physical and material benefits in the present life. So, too, it would appear that not only was there no belief in any form of after-life (and no expectation that the gods were there to provide such an experience), but that there was no expressed *anxiety* concerning the afterlife. There was, rather, a general scepticism in an afterlife, and with it a general lack of interest. The elder Pliny ridiculed various beliefs about life after death, claiming that it was nothing more than

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[1] Cambyses' great grandfather who died thirty years previously.
[2] Hdt. 3.62; likewise see, Arist. *De an.* 1.406b.3-5; Ar. *Eccl.* 1073f.; Aesch. *Ag.* 565-9, 1019-24, 1360f.; *Eum.* 647f. ("Once a man has died, and the dust has soaked up his blood, there is no resurrection"); Soph. *El.* 137ff.; Eur. *Hel.* 1285-7. Even in myth the dead were rarely allowed to rise—after Apollo attempted to bring a child back from the dead, both were punished by Zeus (Pind. *Pyth.* 3.1-60).
[3] 1981:51-57, and see Green 1998:153, 160-161; N. T. Wright 2003:32-84.
[4] MacMullen writes (1981:55), "..."salvation" had to do with health or other matters of this earth, not of the soul for eternal life." Cf. 1981:51.
[5] MacMullen 1981:55; E. Ferguson 1993:280.

nonsense.[1] The only real immortality, many decided, was fame—an honourable name to be left for one's children, family, and descendants.[2]

The philosophical reflections of the Epicureans added to this type of thought.[3] Their view of death was well-known and distinctive and asserted a "victory" over the fear of death by the simple argument that after death all sensation came to an end and one simply ceased to be. Both the body and the soul died. For an Epicurean, any talk of resurrection (of either body or soul), would have been considered ludicrous and irrational; instead, their philosophy aimed at a simple materialistic creed based around one's basic needs. Although they were certainly not self-indulgent, their pursuit of pleasure and tranquillity of mind led to the popular perception that they simply wanted to "eat, drink and be merry."[4]

However, the above is only one part of a broad social picture, albeit a significant one, for there are certainly other funerary inscriptions which do point to belief in an afterlife.[5] Some traditional and popular myths which told of the dead living in a shadowy existence in Hades may well have still held credibility for a few,[6] but for many it was an emphasis upon the salvation of the soul (ψυχή), emanating from Platonic thinking and running through much popular Greco-Roman philosophy, which came to the fore.[7] Ψυχή in classical Greek referred to, "the essential core of man which can be separated from his body and which does not share in the body's dissolution."[8] It was often viewed as *life* itself

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[1] *HN* 7.55.190.
[2] Beard/North/Price 1998:2.236
[3] See Bolt 1998:67-68.
[4] 1 Cor 15:32; and see Tomlin 1997; Thiselton 2000:1172; N. T. Wright 2003:53-54.
[5] Cf. Meeks 1983:181-182, and notes.
[6] Cf. Lucian (*Luct.* 9) can write that even in his own day (second half of the second century CE) a popular conception of the dead is that they reside in Hades, a place deep under the earth in which the corpses (*nekroi*) stay. Dismembered souls reside there too, "...in the form of shadows that vanish like smoke in your fingers." On souls as phantoms or shadows, Hom. *Il.* 23.99-107; *Od.* 11.51-83, 206-8, 210-214; Virgil *Aen* 6.756-885; Juv. *Sat.* 3.278-280.
[7] See esp. E. Ferguson 1993:313-315; Wedderburn 1987:119; N. T. Wright 2003:44-45, 47-53.
[8] Jacob *TDNT* 9.611.

(Homer, Herodotus, Sophocles), or as the *breath* (as the sign of life; Homer), or the spirit of man (Plato, Aeschylus), or, indeed, as the *mind* or *understanding* (Herodotus).[1] The ψυχή represented an entity in its own right in distinction from the body, which it was enabled to govern; it joined itself to the body but could leave it again, whereupon the body would lose its life. The Greeks looked to death as an escape from what they considered to be the weak, corruptible, encumbering body. In this respect, like Epicurean philosophy, the thought of an actual resurrection of the body would have struck many as incomprehensible or absurd, for it was well-known that the body decayed and dissolved after death.[2] Epictetus, for example, a teacher of philosophy and a contemporary of Paul, assumed, like Plato, a body/soul dualism, and portrayed death as the separation of the soul from the body.[3] Speaking derisively of the body, he called it "my wretched flesh,"[4] referred to it as a "corpse" (*nekron*),[5] and perceived it as the location of all manner of desires that should be resisted.[6] Likewise, Plutarch insisted that only the soul could attain to the realm of the gods, from whom it comes, whereupon free of attachment to the body, becoming "pure, fleshless, and undefiled." He asserts that the soul is "contaminated" with the body, for to mix heaven with earth is foolish.[7] Such attitudes were certainly held by the educated elite—that is, those who were cognisant of at least the basic elements of philosophical reasoning and arguments; but such thoughts may also have been true for many of the uneducated in the empire (if

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[1] On texts, see LSJ *sv*.
[2] MacMullen 1981:130. In the light of this general rejection of the possibility of resurrection in the Greek world it is not surprising that many Diaspora Judeans rejected this form of post-mortal hope and espoused a Hellenistic hope in the immortality of the soul. Cf. 4 Macc 14.6; 18.23; Dodds 1965:130, n. 1.
[3] *Diss.* 1.5.4-5; 3.10.14; 3.22.34.
[4] *Diss.* 1.1.9; 1.3.5.
[5] *Diss.* 3.10.15; cf. 3.1.43; 1.25.21; 1.14.5ff.; 3.22.21, 33.
[6] Further on the disparagement of the body, see Pl. *Phd.* 80-85; *Phdr.* 250C (the body as prison); *Cra.* 400C (the *soma/sema*-body/tomb pun); 403E-F; *Grg.* 493A; Plut. *Mor* 137D-E; M. Aur. *Med.* 3.7; Orig. *C. Cels.* 5.14 (where Celsus quotes Heraclitus' disgust at the human body, which "ought to be thrown away as worse than dung"). MacMullen (1984:12) affirms that, "Resurrection in the flesh appeared a startling, distasteful idea, at odds with everything that passed for wisdom among the educated."
[7] *Rom.* 28.6-8.

philosophical education and assumptions can be assumed to have been known, even in part, by the masses).[1] In the second-century CE, the narrator of Lucian's *Lover of Lies* claimed that the wise man (the *sophos*) should be sceptical of myths about Hades and risen bodies.[2]

Greek thought did, of course, allow the possibility of exceptional miracles, but these involved the restoration of the dead to life on earth, followed by eventual death, or else, in the case of the privileged few, by escape from death.[3] The Greek myth of Alcestis, who died to save her husband and was, as a reward, restored to life, is often mentioned in ancient sources, and she became the eponymous heroine in works by Phrynichus and Euripides (438 BCE).[4] So, too, Asclepius, the son of Apollo and renowned healer, was known in Greek mythology to have raised many people from the dead. For example, Pliny the Elder and Lucian both tell of his raising of Tyndareus;[5] Pausanias mentions him raising Hippolytus, son of Theseus;[6] and Apollodorus attributes to Asclepius the raising of several men by use of the blood of the Gorgon.[7] Heracles' own return from Hades is spoken of as a resurrection from out of the earth, and in his catalogue of mythical subjects and themes, Hyginus lists sixteen people "who, by permission of the Parcae, returned from the lower world."[8]

It was widely believed and taught among the Greeks (e.g. by the Pythagoreans, Plato, and Aristotle), that after death the liberated soul would ascend to the heavens and be

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[1] Contra D. B. Martin who writes (1995:114), "...whatever one believed about life after death, promises of resurrected bodies were not to be given any credence. Such gullibility was reserved for the uneducated—that is, the vast majority of the inhabitants of the Empire." Martin presents no evidence for this view of the uneducated, and as there is little evidence (literary, inscriptional etc.) that *any* group in Greco-Roman society looked forward to a resurrected body, it is difficult to see where the "gullibility" of the uneducated may have derived from. It certainly suits Martin's overall thesis (1995, chap. 5) to distinguish the attitudes of the educated elite from the uneducated lower classes in this way, but the evidence is simply absent. Cf. his own caveat, 1995:117.

[2] 2.5.29; cf. the similar scepticism in Hdt. 4.95; Plut. *Mor* 389A; Sext. Emp. *Math.* 1.263, and Philostr. *VA* 1.263.

[3] Wedderburn 1987:183.

[4] Cf. Hom. *Il.* 2.714.

[5] Pliny *HN* 29.1.3; Lucian *Salt.* 45.

[6] *Descr.* 2.27.4.

[7] *Bibl.* 3.10.3.

[8] Hyginus *Fabulae* 251 (*Myths of Hyginus*, trans. Grant), cited in D. B. Martin 1995:111.

changed into a star or other heavenly body.[1] Here, the soul would be immortally present, with its very own substance and glory, and would be analogous to the sun, moon, and other stars.[2] For many, of course, this would make perfect sense—the soul would be returning to the cosmic region which corresponded, it was believed, to its own nature and substance.[3] Hellenistic Judeans held similar, often identical, beliefs.[4] The author of 4 Maccabees (17.5) addresses a martyred mother in "astral" terms, "The moon in heaven, with the stars, does not stand so august as you, who, after lighting the way of your star-like seven sons to piety, stand in honor before God and are firmly set in heaven with them."[5] And Philo notes that the stars are embodied, intelligent souls. He writes of the patriarchs as stars or constellations and notes that the rewards of the righteous soul are immortality and being inscribed, "in the records of God, sharing the eternal life of the sun and moon and the whole universe."[6] So, too, the author of 1 Enoch writes, "The righteous ones shall be in the light of the sun, and the elect in the light of eternal life which has no end."[7] This was taken to refer to a glorified, transformed corporeal existence by many later writers.[8]

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[1] Pl. *Ti.* 29d-38b; 41a-42c; Cic. *Rep.* 6.13-16; Sen. *Ep.* 71.16; 79.12; 102.21-23; 120.17-19; E. Ferguson 1993:222-227, 233-234; N. T. Wright 2003:57-60, 110-112.

[2] Plato maintained that the soul belonged to the divine realm of true existence and is invisible, divine, immortal and wise (*Phd.* 79C; 81A; 83D); and Plutarch wrote that the moon was "a divine and heavenly body" (*Mor.* 929A).

[3] See esp. Sen. *Ep.*71.16; 79.12.

[4] See Cavallin 1974:27, 43-44; *TDNTW* 1373 on Josephus.

[5] Cf. Dan 12:3; *2 Bar.* 51.10; Wis 3.7; *1 En.* 58.3; 62.15; 108.11-14; *2 En.* 66.7; *4 Ezra* 7.97, 125; *T. Mos.* 10.9.

[6] *Opif.* 144; cf. *Somn.* 1.135-145; *Gig.* 7; *QE* 2.114; *Mos.* 2.108.

[7] *1 En.* 104.2; cf. *2 En.* 66.7; *4 Ezra* 7.97; 125a.

[8] In Greek thought there was also the idea of metempsychosis whereby the soul passed into another body and was, in some sense, reincarnated. See Wedderburn 1987:184. Although this is similar to the Pharisaic doctrine of the resurrection of the body outlined by Josephus, there is a marked distinction, for the Greeks considered metempsychosis to involve a different body, not the one that had died, whereas Judean thought sometimes viewed the soul to return to the same body.

Overall, then, Greek thought, like Judean, is rather varied; the commonest beliefs ranged from relatively uninterested agnosticism, to traditional views about the dead dwelling in Hades or under the earth, to expressions of the immortality of the soul.[1]

In summarizing all of the above, it is clear that in both the Hebrew-Judean and Greco-Roman contexts, there is a great diversity of thought and reflection. In both cultures, there is the presence of a vile underworld (Sheol/Hades), there is the possibility of the annihilation of both body and soul, and there is some concept of the immortality of the soul. Where the two differ most is on thoughts of a resurrection of the body. The author of 2 Maccabees certainly envisages a bodily resurrection of some kind, as does the Pharisaic doctrine articulated by Josephus. But, apart from the exceptional and the miraculous, Greco-Roman thought had little room for the concept of a resurrected body. Such talk appears to have been generally ridiculed and seen as objectionable (especially by the philosophically educated), and it is of interest that many Diaspora Judeans took on the Hellenistic hope of the soul alone being immortal.

In terms of honour-shame, it is clear that such was the revulsion of Sheol/Hades in both Hebrew and Greek thought, that existence there was considered one of total humiliation. For if Homer can safely put into the mouth of Achilles, the superlative warrior-hero, the wish to be a slave on earth, with all the corresponding shame that Greek culture attached to such a position, rather than to abide in Hades, this speaks volumes about cultural perceptions of the underworld. So, too, in Greek reflection (and to some extent Judean too), there was an undercurrent of views which saw a dichotomy of soul and body. For some, the

[1] Cicero presents the two commonest philosophical opinions of post-mortem existence when he claims that either the body and the soul are both annihilated at death or the soul separates from the body (*Tusc.* 1.11.23-24). See also M. Aur. *Med.* 4.29.59-61; 5.24.107.

body was the dishonourable part of the whole-man. It was weak, frail, corruptible, sometimes ugly, often polluting, and prone to disease and pain.[1] The soul, on the other hand, was the more honourable and glorious part of the whole-man. It was seen to embrace a divine "spark" which awaited release from the body on death, after which it would rise to the heavens; its glory to be seen immortally present amongst the stars. Even in Judean reflection upon some kind of physical resurrection (cf. 2 Baruch above), it is seen that the body of the righteous will be changed into one of glory and honour. Hence, in many variegated aspects of thought upon post-mortem existence the notions of honour and shame are present and often come to the fore. The eternal hope for most people was to receive honour in some kind of post-mortem existence.

4.4.3 1 Corinthians 15

The subject matter of 1 Corinthians 15 may well have been addressed by Paul in response to information from friends or informants, and like many of the other sections of the letter, the chapter clearly provides evidence of factionalism and dispute within the community: only *some* of them were saying, ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν. Paul gives no indication of whom or how many were denying the prospect of a bodily resurrection, but the extent of his discussion (this is the longest unit in the letter[2]) and the force and logic of his arguments suggest that it may well have been the majority.[3] But if some did not believe in a bodily resurrection, then others obviously did. The initial question to be asked, then, surrounds the reason why the community is divided on what is, for Paul, a central element of

[1] See further Neyrey 1986; D. B. Martin 1995.
[2] And the longest in the Pauline corpus.
[3] So, Furnish 1999:105.

belief. One can assume that after Paul's departure from Corinth some Greek or Roman neophytes may have entered the community with a philosophical outlook on post-mortem existence corresponding to that articulated in the relevant section above. But why, in that case, were those believers who may have been given, or assumed, positions of responsibility in the community (and who were privy to Pauline teaching and "theology" for the long tenure of his stay in the city), unable to expound his teaching and thoughts on the subject of bodily resurrection. Their lack of cogency allowed differences of opinion to arise which stimulated dissent and even discord. But the problem may not have been with these members themselves; it may well have stemmed either from Paul's teaching itself (or lack of it), or with knowledge of certain Gospel traditions.

What is clear from 1 Corinthians 15 is that Paul reminds the community of what he passed on, and what he considered of primary import,

> ...that Christ died for our sins (in accordance with the scriptures),
> that he was buried,
> that he was raised on the third day (in accordance with the scriptures),
> and that he appeared to [various people]. (1 Cor 15:3-5)

What is lacking, of course, is a precise description of the *nature* of Christ's resurrection. There is no mention in the traditional formulae of exactly what was raised, was it the soul, or the body and soul together?[1] Paul may have known perfectly well what *he himself* meant by ἐγήγερται (τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ), and this, of course, is perfectly clear as the chapter proceeds; but the new and radical context and content of Christ's resurrection may not have been articulated fully or explicitly enough while he was with the Corinthians. Many may

[1] See further, Segal 1998:414-417.

have thought that, as a Pharisee (Phil 3:5; cf. Acts 23:6), he was simply advocating some form of metempsychosis or reincarnation.

Paul presents further clarification of the dispute when he allows his initial rhetorical question in the text ("How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?") to be developed by an imaginary interlocutor, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"[1] Together, such statements appear to come to the central issue of the problem—the Greco-Roman mind could not conceive of an ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν precisely because of problems concerning the *nature* of the body involved in such resurrection (and, perhaps with it, the means by which it could be satisfactorily accomplished).

It would appear to be Paul's lack of specific detail that lay at the root of the problem, and this is not unique to 1 Corinthians. From his writing in 1 Thessalonians it is clear that his earliest teaching did not include specific details on the general resurrection of believers nor the nature of post-mortem existence.[2] The Thessalonian believers appear to be still fully immersed in their cultural milieu whereby they perceive the salvific effects of their new-found faith to be beneficial only for the living, and to this end they are grieving for departed friends "...as others do who have no hope" (1 Thess 4:13). Paul chides their ignorance (4:13), but it is born out of the lacuna of his teaching. Indeed, if Paul had spoken of the resurrection of Christ to the Thessalonians (1:10), but had not asserted that believers would participate in the same experience, then for some, their new faith may have seemed little different to certain Oriental cults which pervaded the Empire. The Thessalonians appear to be unsure as to the precise nature of their post-mortem existence, whether they would share the experience of Christ or whether, as in much Greco-Roman thought, they would simply

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[1] Sider (1975:429) maintains, with the support of linguistic data that a better translation is: "Is it possible that the dead are raised?"

[2] On 1 Thess, N. T. Wright 2003:213-219.

have no post-mortem experience.[1] It is of interest, too, that even *after* the problems in Thessalonica and Corinth, Paul can still apparently write with some ambiguity—disparaging the body and looking forward to life in the Spirit, but not articulating a precise concept of the resurrected body for the believer (Rom 7-8; 2 Cor 4:1-5:10). Even in 2 Corinthians, where one might expect him to be particularly careful, he writes, "We...would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8), suggesting an almost mutual exclusivity. Perhaps the variety of Greco-Roman thought and the possible strength of feeling on this vital issue had not yet impressed upon Paul to articulate his thinking more precisely. Certainly, the Corinthians' confusion and misunderstanding may also have led some to doubt the resurrection of Jesus himself, and this explains Paul's lengthy and detailed account of the post-resurrection appearances of Christ (15:1-8).

An additional problem, and source of further confusion, may have stemmed from the Gospel traditions. For while certain Gospel narratives can refer to the physical aspects of Jesus' resurrection body (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39;[2] Jn 20:27), the majority are ambiguous and vague. Jesus is unrecognisable by Mary Magdalene, even after she beholds him (Jn 20:14), and he remains unknown to his followers both on the Emmaus Road (Lk 24:13ff.), and by the Sea of Galilee (Jn 21:4-12). There are occasions when Jesus appears miraculously (Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19, 26), or vanishes (Lk 24:31); he also appears "in another form" to two disciples (Mk 16:12), and appears as a "ghost" to a larger group (Lk 24:36). In addition, the Markan tradition of Jesus' own statement on resurrection proclaims that, "when the dead rise...they will be like the angels in heaven,"[3] and the Lucan tradition of Paul's Damascus

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[1] See Eriksson 1998:238.

[2] Here, Luke articulates Jesus' resurrection as one of the "flesh." Cf. Acts 2:31.

[3] Mk 12:25; see Meier 2000:7: "...it is most likely that the dispute story in Mk 12:18-27, minus perhaps a few short phrases, circulated in the pre-Markan tradition of the first Christian generation." See also Garrison (1997:88-89) on Mk 9:1.

Road experience expounds little in the way of the nature of the risen Christ other than that the vision came in the form of a brilliant light.[1] There would, then, appear to be no fixed tradition as to the exact nature of the resurrected body of Christ. If Paul's teaching lacked specific information regarding the general resurrection of all believers or the precise state of post-mortem existence, or, indeed, if the Corinthians had some knowledge of certain Gospel traditions, then the confusion of the Corinthians is quite understandable.

Returning to the questions surrounding ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν or ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί,[2] a Greek speaker would likely have taken νεκρός to refer to a dead body or corpse,[3] in the plural to the dwellers in the nether world,[4] and the most natural understanding of either of the above phrases would have been a reference to the reanimation of dead corpses from the grave. Certainly, Lucian refers to the emaciated bodies raised out of graveyards by magicians as *nekroi*.[5] In light of this, what many of the Corinthians may have found objectionable or revolting about Paul's teaching was a misunderstanding that he was speaking about the "re-animation of dead bodies, the resuscitation of corpses,"[6] that is, a return to a similar physical condition a person had before death. Here, the problem is not with a resurrection per se, but with a *bodily* resurrection—a resurrection involving a reanimated body which had died. Such thoughts would have been horrifying for those who despised the body and were anticipating the release of the soul and the transcending of corporeality. As Ronald Sider writes, "Greeks longed for escape from the corruptible, encumbering body, not for a future bodily reclothing" (1977:125). The mockery projected at

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[1] Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-11; 26:12-16.
[2] 1 Cor 15:12, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 29, 32, 35, 42, 52.
[3] D. B. Martin (1995:271, n. 9) writes, "The most common translation of *nekros*, especially in classical Greek but also later, is "corpse," although the term has hardly ever been translated that way in the NT."
[4] LSJ *sv.*
[5] *Philops.* 13.
[6] So, Fee 1987:776; followed by D. B. Martin 1995:122-123.

Paul by certain Athenians when he spoke of God raising Jesus from the dead (ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν), demonstrates that, in Luke's opinion, the resurrection of the dead for many (philosophically inclined) Greeks was an absurd idea.[1] Likewise, those Corinthians with greater cultural pretensions may have considered Paul's teaching unsophisticated and vulgar. Other members of the Corinthian congregation, those uneducated in philosophical assumptions, may simply have accepted Paul's teaching even if they did not understand precisely what he meant by a "resurrected body." Perhaps, in this case, they assumed that God or a miracle-worker like Christ could bring a corpse back to life and endow it with immortality as in the case of Alcestis, Asclepius or Heracles.

It is with both of these attitudes in mind that Paul must articulate a sophisticated argument which would alienate neither party and yet present a case for the glory and honour to await the resurrected believer.

Paul's Central Argument: 1 Cor 15:35-50

In 1 Cor 15:1-11, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the traditions that he has passed onto the community concerning Christ's resurrection and, in 15:12-34, he proceeds to expand upon the significance and consequences of these facts in order to demonstrate how inadequate and illogical are the assumptions of those who maintain that there is no ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν. Paul concludes this section with a shocking indictment of the Corinthians' position, "Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for there are some who are ignorant [ἀγνωσία] of God. I say this to your shame [ἐντροπή]" (v. 34). Attitudes towards a general disparagement of the body (wholly reasonable within the Greco-Roman

[1] Acts 17:16-32.

cultural milieu and the intellectual values of some pagan philosophy), may have led certain believers into immoral behaviour.[1] Paul's sharp rebuke, and one that we must remember would have been heard publicly, criticizes and shames them for their behaviour, but also dishonours them further in that it exposes and condemns their ignorance of the workings of God.[2] Yet, there is worse to come, for after articulating a set of questions from an imaginary interlocutor, questions, no doubt, on the lips of those who are denying the ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν ("But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" v.35), Paul issues a further rebuke, "You fool (ἄφρων)!" (v. 36).[3] Paul's antagonists would no doubt be humiliated by such language, but it is vital for the apostle to undermine all intellectual arguments and the naivety of a crude literal understanding of ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, before proceeding to outline his own understanding of the transformation of the body when it is resurrected.

Paul moves quickly on and brings into his discussion an agricultural metaphor of seed and plant, together with two descriptive categories, one of the flesh of animals, and another of the glory of heavenly bodies (vv. 36-41).[4] The metaphor of seed and plant fails in the sense that the planted seed does not strictly "die" but simply grows under the earth (a point which Paul surely understood[5]); rather, the import of the analogy lies elsewhere. Paul's point is simple and yet quite profound and lies in that what emerges from the earth appears to be a completely different life-form or organism to that which was planted. So, too, no-one

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[1] The nature of the "sin" is obscure, although Paul's social analysis in vv. 32f. suggests that they were perhaps dismissing any future judgement and future existence and so felt they could indulge themselves in the present life (cf. the Epicureans; Tomlin 1997:61). Paul's reference to "bad company" (v. 33; a quotation from the lost play *Thaïs* by Menander), is not simply that found whilst dining in temples (so, Witherington 1995:306), but probably implies a wide variety of social settings at which pagan attitudes would predominate.

[2] Witherington 1995:306.

[3] Malina/Neyrey note that within cultures in which honour is a dominant value, "The worst fate is to be called "Fool!"" (1991:26; cf. 36).

[4] On the importance of Genesis 1-2 for 1 Cor 15:35-50 see N. T. Wright 2003:340ff., 353-3546.

[5] So, Sider 1975:438; cf. Usami 1976:479.

could have predicted the final shape and texture of the plant from that of the seed (the seed is sown 'naked' [γυμνός], it is raised with a new 'body' [σῶμα], v. 36). Of course, the planting of the seed under the earth also serves to stand as a metaphor for the death (and burial) of the human body, which is a vital and necessary prelude for the body while it, too, awaits a substantial transformation.[1] So, for the seed, and, as Paul will shortly argue, for the body too, there is an element of continuity as well as discontinuity. In concluding his use of the metaphor, Paul answers the first of his interlocutor's questions ("How are the dead raised?"), by reminding his readers of what is the one single crucial point in the whole process of transformation: it is done solely by the sovereign power of God who effects the process of transformation in accordance with his will (v. 38).[2]

In vv. 39-41, Paul undertakes a short but necessary digression in commenting upon earthly flesh and the glory of various celestial bodies.[3] He begins by briefly outlining the diversity of "flesh" which exists between living animals (man, beasts, birds, and fish); for each category of species has a very different type of flesh and these are essential for its particular existence and function while on earth. (Implicit at this point may be Paul's assumption that the flesh is divinely ordained and is entirely suitable for life in the body on earth.) It is also of some import to note that Paul does not employ the term σῶμα when speaking here of the earthly beings, even when discussing "man;" his focus is upon the earthly σάρξ. However, as the apostle moves on in vv. 40-41 to speak of the differing glory ascribed to the various heavenly entities (sun, moon, stars), he categorizes each as σῶμα. Useful for Paul's argument here is the fact that many Greco-Roman writers, including philosophers (even those who deprecated the human body), referred to these entities as

[1] Wedderburn 1987:210.
[2] Cf. Thiselton 2000:1264. The verb ζωοποιέω in v. 36 is passive, indicating divine action.
[3] Note that the οὕτως καὶ of v. 42a most naturally refers back to vv. 36-38, and that the categories of sowing and raising in 42b-44a could follow on directly from the seed metaphor articulated in vv. 36-38.

σώματα,[1] and, as noted above, it was a common belief amongst the ancients that the human soul was composed of the same ethereal material as the celestial bodies and that the soul would return to some heavenly plain on death.[2] Although Paul is noting the analogy, he is not attempting to explain the resurrection body within a framework of astral immortality. Rather, he speaks of the diversity within each of the two categories (flesh and heavenly glory); but the essential distinction is *between* the two categories themselves, for this is what he will expound upon in vv. 42-50. There is a distinction of essence between the fleshly body which dies and is buried in the ground and the newly clothed σῶμα which will be raised (and clothed) by God and which will, in some way, be *comparable* to the glory and honour of the celestial bodies in the heavens.

In vv. 42b-44a, Paul now commences upon his answer to the second of his interlocutor's questions ("And with what kind of body do they [the dead] come?"), and does so using four pairs of balanced antitheses,

42b	σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ,	ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ·
43	σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ,	ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ·
	σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ,	ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει·
44	σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν,	ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν.

42b	It is sown in corruption,	it is raised in incorruption;
43	it is sown in dishonour,	it is raised in glory;
	it is sown in weakness,	it is raised in power;
44	it is sown a soul-animated body,	it is raised a Spirit-animated body.[3]

[1] E.g., Arist. *Cael.* 2.8, 290A9; Plut. *Mor.* 928A-C; 929A.
[2] Cf. D. B. Martin 1995:117-120. Paul would not have conceived of resurrection in these terms although the Judean apocalyptic tradition found in Dan 12:3 demonstrates that it may have been credible to some.
[3] On the translation of v. 44 see N. T. Wright 2003:348-352.

The verbs σπείρω and ἐγείρω refer back to vv. 36-38 and serve to remind the hearer/reader that at the centre of the act of transformation is God himself who clothes the raised body as he himself wishes. Equally, the two verbs serve to demarcate the two sides of the transformation, and here Paul employs the language of honour-shame. The fleshly body that is sown is corruptible, ἀτιμία, and weak, each of which brings a different nuance of shame to the earthly body. Indeed, the definition of the negative noun ἀτιμία is wide ranging and can be translated as dishonour, disgrace, shame (BAGD *sv*), or in some instances as humiliation or lowly position (Fee 1987:785).[1] Here, it may contain the nuances of all of these.[2] Conversely, what is raised and clothed by God is a resurrected being characterized by incorruptibility, honour, and power.[3] For many of the Corinthians, such a view may have been their eschatological hope. But, although the Greek mind would certainly accept that the fleshly body was corrupt, dishonourable and weak, and those anticipating a resurrection of the soul to join the heavenly stars could happily accept the idea of such a resurrection bringing incorruptibility, glory and power, a jolt for the Corinthians would have come with Paul's concluding antitheses in v. 44, that what is sown is the σῶμα ψυχικόν and what is raised is the σῶμα πνευματικόν.[4]

As noted above, in Greek thought the ψυχή was seen as the essence of a person—one's *life, breath, mind,* or *understanding.* It was seen to have a share in divinity, since the divine power ruled in man by means of the soul. And from Platonic philosophy, it was regarded as immortal and would not come fully into its own until separated from the body.

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[1] See above, pp. 41ff.

[2] See LSJ *sv*; Thiselton 2000:1273; and cf. Phil 3:21: "He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself." As Thiselton rightly points out the context of this passage is identical to the passage under consideration (pre-resurrection and post-resurrection modes of existence).

[3] See further, Bonneau 1993.

[4] Cf. the useful translation of v. 44 by the *Jerusalem Bible*: "When it is sown it embodies the soul, when it is raised it embodies the spirit. If the soul has its own embodiment, so does the spirit have its own embodiment."

The shock here would have been twofold: that the ψυχή could be construed to join the three synonymous substantives (corruption, dishonour and weakness) as making up that "negative" part of the man which must be *sown*, that is, which must be buried and so which in some sense "dies." And secondly, that the raising of the transformed man as a *pneumatikos* could have an association with the σῶμα. But Paul's argument insists that while the earthly body is composed of σάρξ, ψυχή, and πνεῦμα, the resurrected body must be stripped of the first two and retain only the πνεῦμα.[1] Flesh (and blood) certainly has no place in the kingdom of heaven (v. 50), but neither does the σῶμα ψυχικόν—for Paul presumes that this is part of the natural, corruptible, "worldly" aspect of man, which is "unspiritual" in the sense that it is unable to interact with the spirit of the divine. What can only remain is that part of the man which is able to so interact: the πνεῦμα, which will be clothed by God with a new imperishable and glorious body analogous to the celestial bodies.

In short, Paul claims that the true *pneumatikos*, the true person of the spirit, is one who will have the transformed resurrection body.[2] But he also makes clear (vv. 45-49) that the terms ψυχή and πνεῦμα are not simply descriptive categories for the "essence" or composition of the body. Rather, they serve to demarcate the first body in terms of its "earthly" characteristics, which are suitable for the present age upon the earth; and the second body, the *pneumatic* body, in terms of its supernatural characteristics which will be suitable for the future heavenly age. As v. 45 goes on to explain, the supernatural dimension

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[1] So, D. B. Martin 1995:128. That Paul conceives of the ψυχή and πνεῦμα as distinct entities is likely from 1 Thess 5:23 (on the exegesis of which, see Fee 1994:63-66), although since he uses such terms broadly and somewhat interchangeably it is difficult to give a precise definition of distinction. Fee claims that πνεῦμα refers to "the interior, nonmaterial component of the human personality" which is "that part of human existence that serves as the place of intersection between the human and the divine by means of the Holy Spirit" (1994:66, cf. p. 15). Fee is followed by Dunn (1998:76-77) in this regard. Cf. also 1 Cor 2:11.

[2] The same two adjectives are used in 1 Cor 2:14 to describe the basic difference between the believer and unbeliever, "But a ψυχικός does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

comes from the body's transformation by Christ himself, who, through his own resurrection, became "a life-giving Spirit." Here, Fee succinctly observes that, "The transformed body is not composed of "spirit," it is a *body* adapted to the eschatological existence that is under the ultimate domination of the Spirit. Thus for Paul, to be truly *pneumatikos* is to bear the likeness of Christ (v. 49) in a transformed body, fitted for the new age" (1987:786).

Paul's conclusions must have been a radical departure for many (if not most) of the Corinthians, and the surprise for certain members of the community would have been that the transformed resurrection body must leave behind the ψυχή along with the σάρξ.[1] But, in Paul's thought, these are both intertwined with decay, dishonour, and weakness. The σῶμα πνευματικόν, on the other hand, will be subject neither to decay nor death; it will be a glorious body, "constituted in and by power [and] animated by God's Spirit, which Christ gives the believer."[2] The resurrected body will have nothing of the earthly in it at all; it will be composed, through divine transformation, of man's immortal and incorruptible aspects.

4.4.4 Summary

Given the dualistic anthropology of much Greek thought, it is easy to perceive how the notion of the resurrection of the body would have been difficult for a Greek audience in Corinth. For, holding attitudes which perceived the body as weak and corruptible, the majority of the community most likely thought (or hoped), that it just could not happen. In 1 Cor 15:19, when Paul says "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ," he may well be echoing what many of the Corinthians assumed; that belief in Christ was simply for this life

[1] In the words of N. T. Wright (2003:347), Paul is asking the puzzled Corinthians for a "fundamental leap of the imagination."
[2] Witherington 1995:308.

only. After all, in none of the cases of Hebrew-Judean or Greco-Roman thought articulated above, either of a resurrection to continued earthly life or the by-passing of death by a privileged few, do we find an exact parallel to that expressed here by Paul—that Christ was supernaturally resurrected into heavenly glory and that believers would one day follow suit.

A scenario for the social-setting of the chapter could be construed as follows—that Paul's initial teaching on the resurrection was ambiguous or vague (certainly, misunderstood); that this, compounded with elements of the Gospel traditions which were equally unclear, meant that the nascent community had little clarity of thought on the issue; and that following Paul's departure problems arose when hellenized neophytes entered the community who held cultural, even philosophical concepts which disparaged the body and anticipated the resurrection of the soul alone. Such neophytes may have found talk of a resurrection of dead bodies repulsive and shameful compared with their own philosophical outlook of a gloriously resurrected soul, honoured immortally amongst the stars. So, too, any thoughts of attempting to articulate what may have been considered a "perverse" concept to friends and acquaintances, and so inviting contempt and ridicule, may have been too much for a new believer. They had their honour to safeguard! A better alternative, especially in light of certain Gospel traditions, was simply to assume that Paul was mistaken. In any case, the possible failure of the first believers of the community to adequately articulate cogent concepts of a "resurrection" against the persuasive tenets of Hellenistic philosophy, was perhaps a sign that these and/or Paul were in error.

Paul's entire argument in 1 Corinthians 15 is predicated on the resurrection of Christ, but it opens with the citation of a tradition proclaiming "that Christ died for our sins" (v. 3), and this theme threads its way throughout the chapter (vv. 17, 32b-34, 56-57). Here, once again, the apostle confronts his wayward congregation with the starkest reminder of what is

at the very centre of Christ-centred thought and praxis: Christ crucified. If he does not here give a further exposition of the meaning of Christ's death, that is because it has gone before; rather, it is Christ's resurrection, also affirmed in the opening tradition, which forms the centre of Paul's reflections throughout this chapter. If Christ's death reminds of the scandal and shame of the cross, then Christ's resurrection extols the qualities of honour and glory predicated of the risen saviour. Christ's body was raised imperishable and immortal, in divine glory and power, and at his parousia he will serve as God's agent in destroying all dominion, authority and power which sets itself up against the Father (v. 24). For Paul, the risen Christ is now supremely the honoured one, who reigns in glory and power until he has placed all of his enemies under his feet—including the very last enemy, death itself, which will be destroyed as a sign of his ultimate victory (vv. 26, 54-55). The victory of Christ will then be extended to his family of believers and the honour, glory and power of the head of the family extended to his fictive kin. Believers will be raised in glorious transformation, clothed with a new body and, like that of Christ, one constituted in imperishability, immortality, glory and power.

Considered in its appropriate social context, the notions of honour and shame are unmistakeable in this chapter. Paul's argument recognizes the general shame and disparagement levelled at the body within Greek culture together with the determination to safeguard one's social honour and status (which, taken together, would not have predisposed a neophyte believer to speak openly of an ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν). The apostle certainly agrees that the "body" in terms of a flesh and blood entity will not be raised, but by use of metaphor and linguistic flexibility he argues that the "body" in terms of a *pneumatic* entity will be raised in, and with, glory, honour, and power. The "shameful" body will be left behind; the newly constituted, honoured body will be raised. The foolishness and shame

with which he characterizes the Corinthians (15:34, 35), lies in their ignorance of the power and workings of God. Paul has unfolded the mystery of the ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, which in some sense reflects the same dichotomy of shame and honour evidenced in Christ's death and resurrection: that which is seen as shameful will, in the divine plan, be reconstituted in honour.

CONCLUSION

Over fifty-years ago, H. R. Niebuhr pertinently observed that, "most, if not all, of the problems which Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians can be attributed to the influence of the Corinthian cultural setting on the Christians there" (1952:10).[1] Much research has been undertaken since that time (particularly by scholars working from various social-scientific perspectives), in an attempt to explicate more precisely the nature of those wider cultural "influences" which impinged upon the believing community with such devastating effect. On the reading given here, it is suggested that it is the forces of honour-shame which played a pivotal role (in a negative sense) in the development of the nascent Christ-movement in Corinth. For I contend that following Paul's departure, the entry into the community of neophyte believers immersed in cultural considerations of φιλοτιμία, and with it the rapacious pursuit of status and honour, encouraged socially destructive forces to emerge within the community—destructive forces which are evident in each of the disparate contexts examined above.

These were seen to have involved notions of rhetoric, status and "boasting" (chs. 1-4); patronage, exalted spirituality and wealth (ch. 5); legal disputes and community boundaries (ch. 6); asceticism (ch. 7); commensality (ch. 8); appropriate attire at worship and the function of the Lord's Supper (ch. 11); spiritual gifts and one's status in the body of the community (chs. 12-14); and, finally, the disparagement and rejection of a bodily resurrection (ch. 15).

[1] Echoed recently by Furnish (1999:10) and Adams (2000:88, 97).

It is into these contexts that Paul employs the mediating symbol of Christ crucified, and he does so frequently and at key points in the letter. Christ crucified is the δύναμις θεοῦ to effect salvation (1:18-25, 26, 30; 2:1-2; 3:11, 4:15); Christ, the paschal lamb, who was sacrificed (5:7); "you were washed...sanctified...justified through Christ" (6:11); "you were bought with a price" (6:20; 7:23); do not destroy the brother "for whom Christ died" (8:11); taking the bread and wine is a participation in the blood and body of Christ (10:16), which together proclaim Christ's death until he comes (11:23-25, 26); Christ's death "for our sins" (15:1-5); Christ "raised from the dead" as the first-fruits (15:20).[1] So, too, Paul employs the "body/body-of-Christ" metaphor more extensively in 1 Corinthians than in the rest of the Pauline and deutero-Pauline literature combined,[2] where the 'body of Christ' can only be a further reminder to the Corinthians of *that* body which was crucified. Taken together the "body-of-Christ" and "Christ crucified" point inextricably to one place—the cross; where the shame and utter humiliation of the broken body of the crucified Christ confronts in the starkest of terms those Corinthian believers lusting after honour.

There, in the cross of shame, the believer discovers that wisdom and power consist not in what the world values but in something quite different: it is found not in the lusting for honour but in selflessly laying status aside; not in taking advantage of others for the sake of appropriating more honour, but in giving up one's own advantage for the sake of the disadvantaged. As frequently noted above, for Paul, the paradox of Christ crucified becomes the sole model for an ensuing paradoxical relation between the Jesus-movement and the honour-bound structures around them. The image of "Christ crucified" now demands

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[1] See Engberg-Pedersen 1993:129.
[2] Forty-six out of ninety-one occurrences are found in 1Corinthians (51%). See Pickett 1997:120.

nothing less than a radical reappraisal of life itself.[1] In light of this, Paul can insist that the "strong" in the community should not only be sensitive and considerate of the feelings of others, but, if necessary, modify their own behaviour because of how it may affect the "weaker" brother.[2] In first-century Greco-Roman culture this is a scandalous suggestion because it formulates the suggestion of status equality which has the effect of actually dishonouring the strong. It breaks through traditional social boundaries and offers a new honour code for those of the Christ-movement.[3] All of which is a radical inversion of the wider cultural milieu. Paul is, as Richard Hays observes, in the process of forming "countercultural communities."[4]

In light of this overall perspective, it is easy to see where 1 Corinthians 13 fits into Paul's schema, for here, he desires to lay a foundation for the community which would shape their internal relations and behaviour. The main attitude is that of love. Tongues, prophecy, knowledge, even faith, must be subsumed beneath this essential prerequisite if the community aims to grow to maturity (1 Cor 3:1-4). As such, φιλαδελφία stands opposed to φιλοτιμία. Love is not jealous or envious (ζηλόω),[5] does not praise oneself excessively (περπερεύομαι),[6] is not arrogant (φυσιόω),[7] it does not act shamefully (ἀσχημονέω),[8] it is not irritable or resentful. Rather, love bears and endures all things (13:7). Perhaps the Corinthian situation was at the forefront of Paul's mind when he penned similar directives to

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[1] See Fee 1993:45; Furnish 1999:10.
[2] At a number of places, Paul identifies himself with the "weak;" he insists on pursuing manual labour (9:6), he defends the weak on various issues (1 Cor 7; 8:9-13; 10:23-24; 11:22; 12:21-22), and he employs the language of slavery to cast himself as a servant (3:5; 4:1, 9-13).
[3] This relativization of the status of the elite Christ-follower is also evident in Paul's expectation that *all* will contribute to the collection (16:2), not just the elite who would thereby earn more status and honour. See Chow 1992:185-6.
[4] 1994:31 (and the work generally); cf. Engberg-Pedersen 1993:106; Horsley 1997:210; Neyrey 1998:227-228.
[5] On notions of envy see LSJ *sv*; BAGD *sv*.
[6] L&N *sv*.
[7] Unlike the φυσιοῖ who are "puffed-up" in their arrogance (1 Cor 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; cf. Col 2:18).
[8] L&N *sv*.

the church at Rome, "Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom 12:9-10). In both communities, honour is now to be awarded not on the basis of social status but solely on the basis of "brotherly love." Paul's admonitions here and throughout 1 Corinthians, although addressed to all recipients of the letter, clearly point most directly towards those who had higher status. But now, radically, lower status believers are to be awarded the same honour, possibly even more (1 Cor 12:22ff.), by the members of the congregation,[1] and Paul's overriding command is that, "each should look after the interests of the other, not his own" (1 Cor 10:24; cf. Phil 2:4).

First Corinthians is essentially about a community struggling to grasp the uncompromising significance of living in the shadow of the cross and, hence, resisting the disengagement from a Greco-Roman cultural framework which had φιλοτιμία at its very core. It was the pursuit of honour which was at the root of the community's many problems and Paul's reiterated emphasis is that the cross must be allowed to shatter all accepted cultural norms. These are to be replaced with an emphasis on new community and φιλαδελφία—there are to be no questions of hierarchy or honour or status within the new community. Observing 1 Corinthians through the lens of honour-shame has hence allowed valuable insight into patterns of life in one of the early Christ-centred communities, and, on the reading here, the model has a compelling claim to provide the primary social context for a holistic reading of the letter, and the conflict evident within.

[1] See Engberg-Pedersen 1993:130.

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